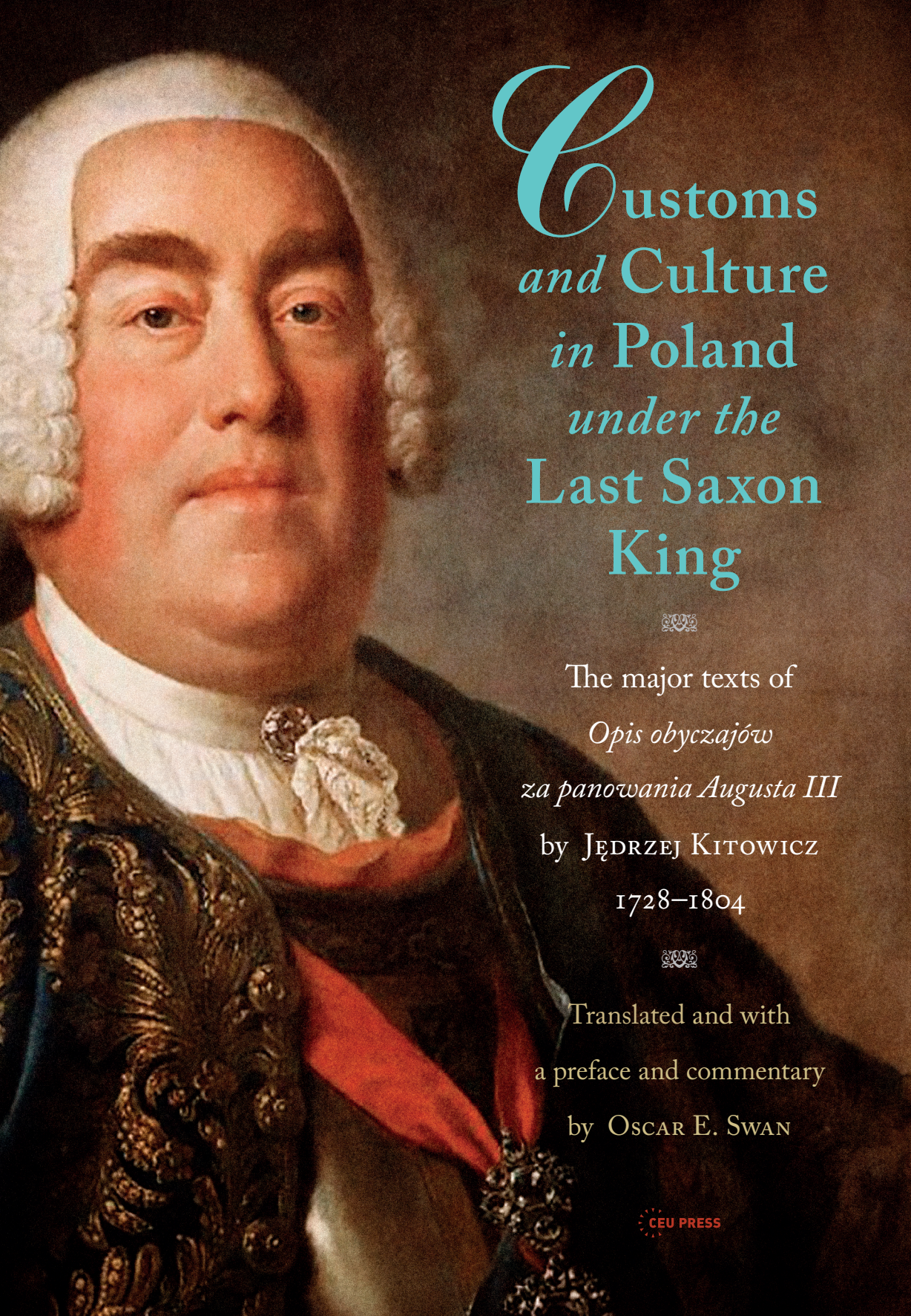


A detailed oil painting of Augustus III of Poland, showing him from the chest up. He has a large, powdered white wig and is wearing a dark, heavily embroidered coat with a red sash. The background is a dark, mottled brown.

Customs and Culture in Poland *under the* Last Saxon King



The major texts of
Opis obyczajów
za panowania Augusta III
by JĘDRZEJ KITOWICZ
1728–1804



Translated and with
a preface and commentary
by OSCAR E. SWAN

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in Poland
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Description of customs during the reign of August III

by JĘDRZEJ KITOWICZ

1728–1804



Translated and with a preface and commentary

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CONTENTS

Preface	1
Glossary of Commonly Used Terms	21
Jędrzej Kitowicz: To the Reader	25



I. RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND INSTITUTIONS OF PIETY

1. Religious Denominations in Poland 29
 2. On Piety 41
 3. The Hospital of the Baby Jesus 54
 4. The Maiden Canonesses 59



II. RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS AND CEREMONIES

5. On Manger Scenes 65
6. Floral Sunday 70
7. Ash Wednesday. Dark Matins 73
8. The Passion Service and the Flagellants 78
9. Easter Processions and the Entombment Ceremony 82
10. The Resurrection Ceremony and Corpus Christi Procession 88
11. Easter Monday and St. John's Eve 93



III. CHILD-REARING AND EARLY EDUCATION

12. Child-Rearing 99
13. The Education of Children Past the Age of Seven 103
 14. Public Schools 108
 15. On Student Privileges 117
16. How Dąbrowski Lost His Head 123





IV. LEGISLATURE AND THE JUDICIARY

- 17. On the Sejms 131
- 18. Eating and Drinking at the *Sejmiks*. Vetting Delegates 144
 - 19. The Marshal's Courts 149
 - 20. On Torture 158
 - 21. The Crown Tribunals 167
 - 22. The Singlesticks Circle 185
 - 23. Deputival Honors and Parades 189
 - 24. The Conclusion of the Tribunals 193
 - 25. The Radom Commission 197



V. THE MILITARY

- 26. The Crown Foot Guard 205
- 27. The Company Circle 215
- 28. The Company Deputation for Tax Collection 221
- 29. The March of the Hussar and Armored Regiments 225
 - 30. Foreign-Style Regiments 235
 - 31. The Hetmans 243
 - 32. The *Sich* and the *Haidamaks* 250
 - 33. On Orders 262





VI. LIVES AND ENTERTAINMENTS OF THE NOBILITY

- 34. Old-Fashioned Cookery 269
- 35. New-Fashioned Cookery 273
- 36. Noble Tables and Banquets 279
 - 37. On the Potato 283
 - 38. Of Beds and Bedding 286
- 39. On Noble Palaces and Homes 289
- 40. On Costume or Dress 296
- 41. Women's Wear: Headgear, Mantles, and Hoop Skirts 318
 - 42. Of Snuff and Snuff Boxes 324
- 43. Of Bags and Watches, Rings and Pins 329
- 44. Household Entertainments 334
 - 45. Of Carnivals and *Kuligs* 337
 - 46. Masked Balls 342
 - 47. Of Drinks and Drinking 349
- 48. On the More Famous Drunkards 358
- 49. Of Carriages and Conveyances 366
- 50. Public Convocations 375



VII. PEASANT LIFE

- 51. On Peasant Customs 385



Appendix: Reading Kitowicz in Context 389

Appendix: List of Texts Not Included 393

Index 395

PREFACE

The most complete record of day-to-day life in Poland in the mid-eighteenth century under the second and last of the elected Saxon kings—and, within the wide range of the subjects it covers, a strikingly colorful and comprehensive record it is—has been handed down to us by a remarkable, if little-known, parish priest from Rzeczyca, a small village in the Łódź voivodeship about ten miles to the south of Rawa Mazowiecka in central Poland: Father Jędrzej Kitowicz (1728–1804). Father Kitowicz bequeathed to posterity two major works, *Opis obyczajów za panowania Augusta III* (Description of Customs During the Reign of August III) and *Pamiętniki czyli historia polska* (Memoirs, or a History of Poland), the latter covering events from 1743 up through and slightly after the reign of Stanisław August Poniatowski, who ruled from 1764 until his abdication in 1795.¹ Two other works—a three-act play about the Polish partitions of 1772–1795 and a history of his church in Rzeczyca—have been lost. Because of the strange peregrinations of his primary work, the *Opis* (Description), during the early years of its existence (see further below), Kitowicz is barely known today except among literary historians specializing in earlier Polish writing—even though arguably his work has, posthumously and anonymously, seeped more deeply into the Polish popular cultural consciousness than many other, better-known writers of his time.

Kitowicz's first attribution as author of the *Description* was in an abridged, thoroughly rearranged and, to an extent, bowdlerized version of the text published in Poznań in 1840 by Edward Raczyński, whose title, *Opis obyczajów i zwyczajów za panowania Augusta III* (Description of Customs and Mores Under the Reign of August III),² has served in an ab-

¹ Jędrzej Kitowicz, *Pamiętniki czyli historia polska*, edited by Przemysława Matuszewska with commentary by Zofia Lewinówna (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1971).

² Edward Raczyński, *Opis obyczajów i zwyczajów za panowania Augusta III księga Kitowicza* (Poznań: Drukarnia Walentego Stefańskiego, 1840). The work can be found on Google Books.

breviated form as the work's title for subsequent editors. The first complete scholarly edition of the work, based on the original manuscript, appeared only in 1951, and revised in 1970, under the editorship of Professor Roman Pollak.³ A newer version, edited with an introduction, a rich assortment of photographic plates, and extensive scholarly commentary by Maria Dernałowicz, was published in 1985.⁴ A version of the complete text may be found on the University of Gdańsk's Virtual Library of Polish Literature,⁵ while the 1840 Raczyński edition is the basis of a Wikisource version.⁶ In addition, fragments of the text are scattered all over the Internet. Indeed, many online descriptions of old Polish customs amount to excerpts, often unattributed, taken from the *Description* and rendered into modern Polish.

What little biographical information is available on Kitowicz is contained in material from his own pen, including his detailed last will and testament;⁷ the introduction to the second part of his *Pamiętniki* (Memoirs); and a broad-ranging correspondence, some 130 items of which, amounting to some 1000 pages in all, are preserved in the Polish Library in Paris.⁸ Given his obscure position in his own time and the slight degree to which his work is known among the general public today, it is rather

3 Jędrzej Kitowicz, *Opis obyczajów za panowania Augusta III*, in the series *Biblioteka Narodowa*, edited and with an excellent introduction by Roman Pollak (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy Ossolińskich, 1970), xxiv ff.

4 Jędrzej Kitowicz, *Opis obyczajów za panowania Augusta III*, edited and with commentary by Maria Dernałowicz (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1985).

5 <http://literat.ug.edu.pl/kitowicz/index.htm>, accessed October 2, 2015. The site does not say on which version of the *Description* it is based. This version is marred by many typographical errors arising from laxly corrected digital scans.

6 [https://pl.wikisource.org/wiki/Opis obyczajów_i_zwyczajów_za_panowania_Augusta_III](https://pl.wikisource.org/wiki/Opis_obyczajów_i_zwyczajów_za_panowania_Augusta_III), last accessed February 4, 2016.

7 Kitowicz's will can be found, among other places, on the website <http://www.kitowicz.pl/>, maintained by the parish church in Rzeszyca.

8 Digital copies of Kitowicz's correspondence are preserved at the parish house in Rzeszyca. Various of Kitowicz's letters are cited in the introduction by K.W. Wojcicki to *Opis obyczajów i zwyczajów za panowania Augusta III, przez księdza Jędrzeja Kitowicza*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Petersburg and Mohylev: Nakładem Bolesława Maurycego Wollfa, 1855). Renata Bizior examines the stylistic features of his correspondence with Józefa Zarębina in "Z prywatnej korespondencji Jędrzeja Kitowicza – uwagi o cechach gatunkowych osiemnastowiecznego listu" [From the private correspondence of Jędrzej Kitowicz: remarks on the generic features of the eighteenth-century letter], *Filologia Polska: Językoznawstwo VIII* (Częstochowa: Akademia im. Jana Długosza, 2012), 23–40. Most of Kitowicz's known correspondence and shorter independent writings are collected in Tomasz Ciesielski, Sławomir Górzyński, and Filip Wolański, eds., *Korespondencja i gazetki rękopiśmienne Jędrzeja Kitowicza z lat 1771–1776* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2018).

surprising to see his recently restored portrait, painted toward the end of his life, hanging in the offices of the director of the Academy of Sciences in Kraków, the bequest of a third-generation niece.⁹ A second portrait, showing Kitowicz as a younger man, hung in the parish church in Rzeszyca until 1974, when it mysteriously disappeared and turned up in a Desa antique store, where it was purchased by the Adam Mickiewicz Library of Polish Literature in Warsaw, in whose offices it presently hangs (although negotiations are presently underway for its return).

Kitowicz is almost completely silent on the subject of his family origins and birthplace, limiting himself to saying in the introduction to the second part of his *Memoirs* that he was a “*rodowity Polak*” (native-born Pole). For over 200 years scholars pondered over the mystery of his place of birth and social status, whether noble or burgher. Professor Roman Pollak devotes much space to this question, eventually concluding that he came from the middle class. According to not widely disseminated information unearthed in the archives of the Holy Cross Church in Warsaw¹⁰ by Father Henryk Linarcik, the current parish priest in Rzeszyca, Jędrzej Jan Kitowicz was born in Warsaw around three o'clock in the morning on November 25, 1728, the son of Andrzej Kitowicz, apparently a minor nobleman, and Katarzyna Buczkowska, who were married four years earlier in the same church.¹¹ Kitowicz had an older sister, Ludwika Rozalia, later

9 On the restoration, see Karolina Grodziska, “Portret Jędrzeja Kitowicza, niezwykle dar dla towarzystwa naukowego krakowskiego z 1859 r. i jego konserwacja w 2013 r.,” *Rocznik Biblioteki PAU i PAN w Krakowie* (2015): 63–68. A copy of the Kraków portrait, made at the time of the restoration, hangs in the parish house in Rzeszyca.

10 This is the well-known church on Krakowskie Przedmieście in which many Polish notables are buried and in which Fryderyk Chopin's heart is preserved. I would like to express here my thanks to Father Henryk Linarcik for his hospitality in his parish home and generosity in providing me with copies of various documents and other materials he has accumulated on the life and literary reception of Jędrzej Kitowicz.

11 Scanned copies of Kitowicz's baptismal certificate and the marriage certificate of his parents are on display in the parish house in Rzeszyca. The surname Kitowicz is not contained in any register of Polish nobility. One might speculate that the name was for some reason a blend of Kotowicz and Kitkiewicz. The name Jędrzej is a variant of Andrzej (as the son was actually christened) and may have been used by the family to distinguish between father and son. A completely fantastic version of Kitowicz's birth in Paris, supposedly fathered by a nobleman named Szczepanowski, fleeing from the consequences of a Warsaw duel, may be found in Leszek Łukasiewicz, *Rys dziejów piśmiennictwa polskiego, wydanie przerobione i powiększone* (Kraków: Drukarnia Józefa Czecha, 1857), 108. Łukasiewicz derives the name Kitowicz from French *quitté*: “clear, free.”

Makowska, with whom he corresponded throughout his life. From the correspondence it emerges that there were also twin siblings, who died at an early age. To tell the truth, given his many inside looks at the nobility, it is hard to imagine that he was not of that class.

As one learns from his chapter on early schooling, as a boy Kitowicz attended school in Warsaw, probably the Piarist one, considered progressive for the time. Upon finishing at least three years of “rhetoric” in middle school, he went into service as secretary for Michał Lipski, abbot of the Benedictine monastery in Lubin, in west-central Poland. In 1768 he quit that occupation to join the Bar Confederacy (1768–1772), a rebellion and virtual civil war “for faith and freedom” against the rising influence of Russia under Catherine the Great, taking part in battles in Radom, Częstochowa and, by then a regimental commander and captain (*rotmistrz*), in Poznań. The Bar Confederacy, to which Kitowicz devotes much space in his *Memoirs*, was raised, among other things, in protest of the installation on the Polish throne, following August III’s reign, of Poniatowski, Russia’s preferred choice for king. Throughout his *Description* Kitowicz rarely misses an opportunity to criticize life under Stanisław August Poniatowski, a figure whom most historians treat rather positively, as promoting much-needed political reforms and the progressive ideas of the Enlightenment. As bad as things seem to have been under August III, Kitowicz repeatedly suggests, they got even worse under his successor.¹²

When already in his forties, encouraged by prominent members of the Catholic Church hierarchy with whom he had remained in contact since the early days of his employment, particularly Michał Lipski, Kitowicz decided to take religious vows, the study for which, owing to his weak background in theology, he completed slowly, with difficulty, and without special enthusiasm, his ordination requiring intercession on his behalf with the church in Rome on two separate occasions.¹³ He was ordained in 1777 at the age of 49 and in 1781 became a parish priest in Rzeczyca.

12 Kitowicz expresses a more positive appraisal of Poniatowski in his *Memoirs* following the king’s death, writing that he was a good man at the wrong time.

13 Maria Dernałowicz is convinced (in a talk given on the two-hundredth anniversary of Jędrzej Kitowicz’s death, Rzeczyca, October 9, 2004) that his motivation for taking the cloth was to have the time to devote to his two pet projects: the writing of the *Description* and the *Memoirs*.

After devoting the first years of his service to bringing some kind of order to the run-down parish property to which he was assigned, and on whose upkeep and renovation he claims in his testament to have spent much of his own resources, in 1788 Kitowicz settled down to describe in the two mentioned separate major works—apparently mostly from memory and on the basis of personal notes—the events, personalities, and customs of the Polish mid-eighteenth century to which he had been a first-hand witness and which, he felt, had been described in a partisan manner by other chroniclers of the era, particularly in regard to the person of August III of Saxony.

The Saxon kings ruled Poland from 1697 until 1763, a period sometimes referred to as the “Saxon Night” when, as both Poles and their rapacious neighbors readily agreed, “*Polska nierządem stoi*” (Poland stands in anarchy). The Saxons did not know Polish well, took little interest in the country, and served as largely absentee rulers. Increasingly, they became the complacent pawns of Russian and wealthy noble interests, as foreign armies marched across Polish lands with impunity,¹⁴ the paralytic Sejm (Diet, or national parliament) enacted almost no laws, and indulgence in pleasures and entertainment was the watchword of the day—all of which was the prelude to the total political collapse of Poland toward the end of the century, and its stage-by-stage dismemberment by Prussia, Russia, and Austria in the partitions of 1772, 1793, and 1795.

August III’s peaceful and indolent reign lasted thirty years, from 1734 until 1763, corresponding to Kitowicz’s life from the ages of six to thirty-five. Remaining true to his theme of chronicling customs under August’s reign that he himself or “highly reliable witnesses” had seen with their own eyes, aside from the chapter “On the Sejms,” there are hardly any reverberations in the *Description* of the turbulent political situation in Poland during the time the work was being written, and even in this chapter there are no critical comments directed toward the Saxon ruler, toward whom the author feels a surprisingly strong sense of patriotic loyalty. Along with many Poles at the time, he admires August III for his piety, cultivation of the arts, elegant life style, and for presiding over a period of

¹⁴ Most prominent of such eighteenth-century incursions on Polish territory was the Great Northern War (1700–1721), in which a coalition led by Peter the Great of Russia contested Swedish military supremacy across northern Europe.

relative, even if illusory, calm. Nineteenth-century historians, influenced especially by the views of the political reformists under the succeeding regime of Poniatowski, tended to portray August III as a bumbling and incompetent know-nothing under the sway of his scheming money-grubbing fellow Saxon, prime minister Heinrich von Brühl. More recently August and his period have undergone something of a rehabilitation, as historians emphasize the positive accomplishments of his reign: in the arts, culinary sphere, social life, architecture, and in the establishment of such enduring institutions as the coffee house,¹⁵ subjects that Kitowicz comments upon at length, usually from a skeptical distance. Under August, Poland was becoming Europeanized, and Kitowicz devotes a large amount of space in the *Description* to changes in clothing, as Poles gradually forsook their traditional Sarmatian garb (żupan, kontusz, and sash belt) in favor of Western wear.

A self-described natural historian, Kitowicz's keen eye, assiduous note-taking on the minutiae of everyday reality (according to him, from the age of fifteen), and prodigious visual memory for persons, places, and things—often surpassing belief on certain subjects, such as military uniforms, coach construction, or women's hair styles—produced a rich and variegated chronicle of Polish society during late Saxon times. If he has a fault, it is in not always recognizing the point at which his penchant for microscopic itemization begins to test his reader's interest, leading to tediousness. Not surprisingly, given that he works mainly from memory, he makes occasional mistakes as to dates and persons, and in many places he is surely exaggerating for humorous effect, but independent, even if less colorful—and less spiced with funny anecdotes—sources confirm that his account is, on the whole, a fair and faithful reflection of those times. Were it not for his remarkable *Description*, today one would have a much less complete, and certainly less picturesque vision of Polish society in the waning days of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, as it teetered into the period of the partitions. Even in its early, fragmentary, and often plagiarized versions,

15 A similar rehabilitation has taken place regarding Kitowicz's *Memoirs*, which were long dismissed as a sketchy, disorderly, and unreliable recounting of late eighteenth-century history. More recently they have undergone reappraisal as a noteworthy example of eighteenth-century writing and narrative talent; see especially the introduction by Przemysław Matuszewska to the 1971 edition of Kitowicz, *Pamiętniki czyli historia polska*, 5–34.

the *Description* provided an abundant trove of source material to be mined by nineteenth-century writers of historical fiction such as Henryk Rzewuski (1791–1866), Józef Kraszewski (1812–1887) and, especially, Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846–1916). Aleksander Orłowski's well-known painting *Feast at the Radziwills*, which foregrounds a flunky wiping off a priest's plate with the priest's hanging scapular, was surely inspired by Kitowicz's anecdote of such an event in his chapter on banquets among the nobility. Even Andrzej Wajda's 1970 film "Birchwood," a comparatively recent production, seems to have taken a page from Kitowicz's description of the water fights on Easter Monday, as the peasant Michał inundates his fiancée with a full bucket and then dumps her in a watering trough, while the delicate Stanisław uses an atomizer, just as Kitowicz describes. Professor Pollak finds resonances of him as far afield as the Russian writer Nikolai Gogol's depiction of student life at the Jesuit academy in Kiev in his ghost story *Viy*.

The *Description* is divided into seven major parts, arranged according to socio-professional category, treating such topics as religious beliefs and observances, monastic orders, child-rearing and early education, the legal profession, the military, the life of the nobility, and peasant customs. Generally speaking, the work gets better the farther it goes, as the author's impulse to entertain begins to catch up with his stated desire to describe. The longest and later section, on the life of the nobility, is without a doubt the best from a literary standpoint. The last part, on the peasantry, unfortunately consists of just a few pages on peasant dress. In his introduction to the second part of his *Memoirs* he had written: "How far I will get in years I cannot know; for that reason I place no end-point to my writing. I will write for as long as I am able, and the time and place of my demise will be the end of my work." Indeed, the *Description* manuscript breaks off in mid-sentence, while describing peasant headgear, and just after commenting on the dreadlocks (*koltuny* or "Polish plaits")¹⁶ of the Mazovian peasants, as though he had been taken away from his writing by some petty exigen-

16 "Polish plait" is a condition in which the hair becomes matted and entangled irreversibly, apparently once common among Polish peasants. Michael Grabowski's theatrical production "*O północy przybyłem do Widawy, czyli opis obyczajów III*" (At midnight I arrived in Widawa, or description of customs III), based on themes from Kitowicz for presentation in Rzeszyca in commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of Kitowicz's death, treats the *koltun* as totemic of the times.

cy or indisposition of the moment, not knowing that he was never going to return to it. He had wanted to devote additional sections to the lesser, or “cottage” gentry, the burgher class, Jews, and Gypsies, but in the end those ambitions were not realized.

One could mention many other subjects one wishes he had covered. Professor Pollack regrets that he did not address more thoroughly farming, hunting, and horsemanship—subjects on which, besides wine and drink (to which he devotes many pages), he was clearly an expert.¹⁷ Given how much space he spends describing (more exactly, deprecating) the legal profession, one wishes he could have devoted more words to the medical profession as well—although occasional asides on that score, mocking doctors’ sage advice on the medicinal properties of various foods and beverages, as in the chapter “New-Fashioned Cookery,” make it plain that he held it roundly in contempt too:

Before dinners at which meat was to be served, one or more raw herring would be set out on the table, of which the lords would take a fillet or so before each dish for whetting the appetite. They were urged to do so by doctors who, expecting that gluttony would lead to disease, advised their patients to do whatever they could to ruin their health, so as to have someone to treat.

Perhaps his ultimate dismissal of the medical profession can be found in his own last will and testament, in which, evidently worrying about being misdiagnosed and buried alive, he directs his executors not to inter his body until it had begun to smell bad.¹⁸

17 Karol Sienkiewicz, in his *Skarbiec polskiej historii* [Treasury of Polish history], vol. 1 (Paris: Maulde et Renou, 1839), 2–3, writes about Kitowicz’s local renown as farmer, horseman, huntsman, dog-fancier, and wine-clarifier. Additional biographical information may be found in the introduction to an 1855 edition of the *Description* by J. K. Wojcicki, *Opis obyczajów i zwyczajów za panowania Augusta III* (Petersburg and Mohylev: Bolesław Wolff), iv.

18 According to his instructions, Kitowicz was buried next to his church’s altar. When the original wooden church was replaced with a larger, still standing, brick-and-mortar one built in late baroque style and consecrated in 1891, his remains were removed and placed together with those of another priest in the town cemetery, where they still lie, awaiting reinterment closer to the church. See the article by Bogdan Sobieszek “*Wola plebana*” [The rector’s will] in the Łódź cultural newsletter *Kalejdoskop* 3 (March), 2014, accessed on August 11, 2016 at <http://www.kitowicz.pl/102-prasa-o-kitowiczu/kalejdoskop-kultury>.

There is comparatively little discussion in the *Description* of women, other than the delightful, if rather misogynistic chapter describing their outer dress (see “Women’s Wear: Headgear, Mantles, and Hoop Skirts”), and his constant references to women’s physical appearance—aspects to which the former military man seems to be particularly attentive. From remarks scattered throughout the *Description*, one gets a decidedly mixed picture of his views on what he repeatedly refers to as the *biała płeć* (“fair sex”). He singles out the majority of female religious devotiates as “hypocrites, quarrelers, gossipers, calumniators, and drunks” (in “On Piety”), while he openly admires the women who give as good as they get in Easter Monday water fights (in “Easter Monday and St. John’s Eve”). He is more condemnatory of the noble wives sneaking out with their friends to the local *apteka* (drugstore) after breakfast for a snort or two (or three) of vodka in “On Drink” than he is of the prostitutes busily plying their trade in the finer districts of Warsaw in “The Marshal’s Courts.” In the same chapter, the spat of the foul-mouthed and politically opinionated women street vendors, arguing over the election of the next Polish king, is one of his classic vignettes. He instantly spots the hypocrisy behind the installation in Marienville of the “Maiden Canonesses,” while he describes with protective tenderness the timid female self-flagellators in “The Passion Ceremony and the Flagellators.” His brief description of *comber*, interpreted today as “women’s night out,” away from husbands and housework, attached to his description of the *kulig* or sleigh party in “On Carnivals and *Kuligs*,” is doubtless the source of the word for the recently revived custom.

A late-comer to the cloth, Kitowicz reveals himself to be less than expert on—and considerably less than inspired when writing about—church affairs and religious orders. Professor Pollak thinks this part may have been copied from some other source.¹⁹ He flatly declines to describe women’s religious orders, claiming lack of knowledge. He ranks men’s orders according to his personal assessment of the esteem in which they were held: the Jesuits, Piarists, Missionary Brethren of St. Vincent de Paul (his order), Capuchin Friars, and the Reformists. He becomes so tangled up in this complex and convoluted subject that it takes his most recent editor, Maria Dernałowicz, entire pages of fine-print notes to more or less

19 Roman Pollak, introduction to Kitowicz, *Opis obyczajów* (1970), xxix.

explicate things for the reader. We have not included that section here, as its chapters are dry to read, hold only slight interest for the modern reader, and they are not particularly accurate to boot. The author is on firmer ground—and much more engaging—when describing military rituals, men's and women's costume, bedroom fittings, table settings, and other accoutrements of noble living (carriages, harnesses, porcelain, snuff boxes, purses, pocketwatches, and the like). As such, his *Description* is a mid-eighteenth-century panopticon, revealing an astounding visual memory and a modern ethnographer's eye for what constitutes a society's material culture. His description of "The Company Circle," to mention only one chapter, defies the saying that a picture is worth a thousand words, as his writing outstrip any artist's ability to depict the cavalry company's yearly ceremony-laden get-together. In other places one feels that a picture could have better been used to supplant a page or more of difficult-to-follow written description of physical objects like household furniture, soldiers' uniforms, or men's and women's clothing.

For literary historians Kitowicz has been difficult to pigeon-hole. Generically, his *Description* is virtually unique for its time—according to Professor Pollak, even in a European context.²⁰ In many respects it is like the travelogue of a visitor to exotic lands, where the places he visits are his own country at a slightly earlier date. For reason of the time period of his subject matter, Pollak comes close to treating him as a representative of old Polish literature, comparing him favorably to Mikołaj Rej (1505–1569) and Jan Pasek (1636–1701),²¹ writers from whom Kitowicz is separated by entire centuries. Because of his ties to the Bar Confederacy, the Church, and his comparatively conservative social attitudes, including his antipathy toward the reign of Poniatowski, it is tempting at first glance to assign him to the so-called Sarmatian baroque, which was characterized by intellectually impoverished bombastic poetry and "noble ramblings" (*gawęda*) of a primitive religious or patriotic nature, characteristics that have nothing to do with Kitowicz's sharp-eyed, down-to-earth depiction and critique of Polish eighteenth-century life and times, whose blemishes he points out

20 Ibid., xxvi. Pollak finds a European parallel to Kitowicz's *Description* only in William Harrison's 1577 *A Description of Elizabethan England*.

21 Ibid., xxiv ff. Pollak considers that Kitowicz belongs in the company of Rej and Pasek as one of the three most accomplished narrators of early Polish literature.

forthrightly at every turn. Julian Krzyżanowski refers to him as a “glimmer of light ... heralding better things to come”²² after the dark of the Saxon Night, as if forgetting that Kitowicz was writing in retrospect, from the perspective of the end of the eighteenth century, with whose writers he can also be profitably compared. He is no reformist, but he is certainly no apologist for Poland’s “Golden Age” of noble freedoms either. Separating him above all else from the writers of the Sarmatian baroque is his utter lack of pomposity and pedantry. Nor, as one might expect from a priest, is he hasty to draw moral conclusions.

Poland’s first real novel, the satirical *Mikołaja Doświadczyńskiego przypadki* (The Adventures of Nicholas Wisdom) by Ignacy Krasicki,²³ Poland’s foremost author of the Enlightenment, was published in 1776, and it is difficult to believe that Kitowicz, writing a dozen or so years later, was not familiar with it. Krasicki’s parodical fictionalized account of the corrupt and venal Lublin Tribunal (a nobles’ appeals court), where judges openly solicited bribes, witnesses routinely gave false testimony, and the corridors were rivers of alcohol, finds its almost exact mirror image in Kitowicz’s description of the tribunals in both Piotrków and Lublin.²⁴ His description in “Religious Denominations in Poland” of how the youth of his time were being corrupted by the importation of French “masters,” too incompetent to make a living in their own country but nevertheless welcomed in Poland by hopelessly gullible parents, instantly reminds one of Krasicki’s portrayal of young Nicholas Wisdom’s foppish and frivolous French tutor Damon and Nicholas’ doting parents. It must be said that Kitowicz’s carefully meted-out irony as a means of expressing his views on society’s flaws and people’s foibles can often seem more effective than Krasicki’s sometimes heavy-handed didacticism.

Professor Pollak speculates that Adam Mickiewicz, the genius of Polish Romanticism, must have had access to certain of Kitowicz’s passages when writing his lyrical paean to the rural Polish gentry, his novel in

22 Julian Krzyżanowski, *History of Polish Literature* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1978), 152.

23 For the reference to Krasicki’s work, see the critical bibliographical appendix “Reading Kitowicz in Context.”

24 Mieczysław Klimowicz in his 1973 edition of Krasicki’s work cites Kitowicz in support of Krasicki’s description of the Lublin tribunals and the Warsaw sejms.

verse *Pan Tadeusz* (Master Thaddeus, 1834), set in the years leading up to the Napoleonic campaign of 1812.²⁵ Mickiewicz surely did not need any inspirational help from Kitowicz, but the comparison is instructive. Like Mickiewicz, Kitowicz was a detail-driven chronicler for the next generation of the exotic recent past as it had just come to its end, a way of life irretrievably lost and already barely imaginable even to those who immediately followed, and fascinating to them precisely for that reason. Unlike Mickiewicz, Kitowicz's unvarnished memoirs can in no way be considered to be refracted through the lens of a rose-tinted Romantic nostalgia.

Aside from questions of his literary connections, Kitowicz is without a doubt one of eighteenth-century Poland's major humorists in a sardonic vein, able to capture the absurd, amusing, or outré side of almost anything. Usually letting events speak for themselves, confident that his reader will share his own ironic view of things without needless prodding, his feel for what is going to strike a future reader as funny about his times is uncanny. An unresolved issue in approaching Kitowicz and his humor is whether, or to what extent, it should be viewed as mostly "naïve" or "primitive," the answer to which largely depends on the extent to which one considers that he is self-aware of the humorous effects he elicits from the modern reader on almost every page, evident in particular in his descriptions of military customs and ceremonies, whose rigmarole he so colorfully describes, and which strike the modern eye as little short of hilarious. Take, for example, the following passage, innocuous at first glance, from the inspector-general's review of "Foreign-Style Regiments":

Each driver, like a soldier on command, lashed his horses and drove past the inspector-general, cracking his whip as he went as a sign of professional competence, after which he proceeded to the horse barn or, if he and his horses had been hired, then to home.

Considering that the drivers of the troop wagons, who are officially listed as being on the regimental roster and payroll are, in fact, non-existent, and are here provided by local stand-ins hired for the occasion and

25 Pollak, introduction to Kitowicz, *Opis obyczajów* (1970), lv. For *Pan Tadeusz*, see the critical bibliographical appendix "Reading Kitowicz in Context."

dressed in shabby moth-eaten uniforms in order to make up the ranks for purposes of the inspection (with the cynical collusion of the inspectors themselves), their “professional competence,” whatever that means in this context, is hardly demonstrated by their skill at “cracking a whip,” after which, in any case, they go straight home. The regimental wagons themselves have only the function of being hauled out for the yearly round of inspections. This paragraph, and many others like it, can be viewed equally well as a piece of naïve writing or as part of an ingeniously constructed exposé, dripping at every word with irony, sarcasm, and a virtually modern sense of the absurd, of the utterly sham nature of the foreign-style regiments, the inspector-general and his corruption-laden inspection, and the threadbare and underfunded state of the Polish military. There are very many such passages in the *Description*, and Przemysława Matuszewska, who devotes her longest chapter in her book on Kitowicz’s prose to analyzing his humor, barely touches on this question.²⁶ Suffice it to say that it would be a disservice to Kitowicz to categorize him as one in a string of naïve writers whose prototype would be Jan Pasek, and whose rough humor is, in fact, accurately described as bizarre, estranging, unwitting, and almost always at that author’s own expense. Just because Kitowicz does not share the ideology of the Polish Enlightenment with its better-known and more polished writers does not mean that his wit and powers of critical observation are any the less sharp than theirs.

A signal theme of his, unnoticed by any of his Polish commentators thus far, is the continual devolution of solemn ceremony into virtually slapstick comedy. In this respect, Kitowicz fits comfortably within the twentieth-century Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin’s idea of the “carnavalesque,” an innate human impulse for burlesquing the institutional pillars of a society riven by sharp social distinctions.²⁷ For example, in “Easter Processions and the Entombment Ceremony” we read how, “Should two flagellant processions converge at the same time in front of the same church, and if they were sufficiently stubborn that one

26 Przemysława Matuszewska, *Proza Jędrzeja Kitowicza* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Ossolińskich, 1965).

27 Bakhtin’s theory of the carnivalesque is most thoroughly developed in his examination of the French writer François Rabelais (1483–1553) in *Rabelais and His World*, translated by Helene Isvolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

did not want to yield right of way to the other, it could come to fisticuffs or sticks, and rocks would fly.” In the same chapter, if the man playing the role of Jesus in the Easter procession finds that his cross is too large to fit through the door of the church being visited, “Jesus” leans his cross against the side of the church, takes a smoke, and heads for the local tavern. When those playing the Roman soldiers catch up with him, they drive him back to the church to get his cross, beating him across the back with the flat of their swords, but this time not just play-acting. In “On Manger Scenes,” the author describes how the originally humble church crèche display, through the addition of movable figures having nothing to do with Christmas, eventually evolves into what amounts to a Punch and Judy show, ultimately transmogrifying into a melee and free-for-all among the spectators.

In another chapter, the Palm Sunday church celebration begins with elevated speeches delivered through the mouths of children, but soon turns into a riotous parody performed by older boys, who are then pushed aside by neighborhood riff-raff who give even more off-color skits and, after the service is over, spread out into town, beg for small change for their performances, and end up at the local tavern. As the most lasting impression of the triumphal Easter Day procession, Kitowicz leaves the reader with a vision of swarms of pickpockets flitting about, ferreting through the purses of the devout. Even in his description of the august Lublin tribunals, upon the issuance of a verdict the chamber doors swing open to let in a tumbling, brawling throng of contesting parties and their legal counsel, leaving participants with bruises, lost hats, and ripped clothing. Probably best illustrative of the overall tendency of devolution to physical violence is the chapter “Public Convocations,” the first half of which is devoted to the pompous grandiosity of the liveried coaches and parades of the high nobility, the second to the crude, vulgar, and boisterous behavior of the servants assisting at such events. Matuszewska attributes such themes to Kitowicz’s having been infused in his formative years with a “baroque” literary sensibility, which luxuriated in bizarre contrasts and unexpected developments, but the Bakhtinian interpretation seems to capture this aspect of Kitowicz much better.²⁸ The baroque influence, if there is one, is more

28 Matuszewska, *Proza Jędrzeja Kitowicza*.

clearly exhibited in the description of the extravagant noble banquets and royal and military parades and ceremonies.

In this same general regard, but closer to home, students of Polish literature cannot help drawing many parallels between Kitowicz and Witold Gombrowicz (1904–1969), in whose best-known novel, *Ferdydurke*,²⁹ crucial scenes end up in a *kupa*, a writhing mass of bodies and general slugfest among the socially, generationally, and sexually disparate actors, literarily suggesting that this is the only way the author can think of to extricate himself from one scene and transition to the next. However, for the characters in the novel it is a way for them to reach out and release built-up social and sexual tension in a drive to establish authentic contact with others. The servants' surreptitious groping of the ladies' crotches from behind as they alight from their carriages in "Public Convocations" illustrates this tendency quite graphically.

Other proto-Gombrowiczian themes—besides the absurdist streak already mentioned—can be found by treasure-hunting throughout the *Description*, for example, in the laying bare of the crudity behind the respectable veneer of high society in "The More Famous Drunkards," and everywhere a fascination with the arbitrary form of the objects that comprise one's everyday surroundings, whether of carriages or women's hats, snuff-boxes, beds, or drinking vessels.

The glittering chapter "Masked Balls" can be used to illustrate various Gombrowiczian themes, masks being a literalization of the grimaces one puts on each day as one goes about life, interacting with other people with their own assumed masks. However, here too, the desire to reach out to and intermingle with the rest of humanity (Gombrowicz's "inter-human church") via one's mask is foremost. Possibly the most salient similarity between the two writers is their mutual fascination with Ceremony of all types, but particularly Roman Catholic church ceremony as the epitome of how one is hemmed in on all sides by the constraints of Form: the molds and postures into which one is forced by social convention. The day "allocated for senatorial wives kissing the royal hand" in "Women's Wear: Headgear, Mantles, and Hoop Skirts" seems exactly like something one

29 Witold Gombrowicz, *Ferdydurke*, translated by Danuta Borchard (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957).

would encounter in a Gombrowicz play.³⁰ On occasion, one sees Content going over completely to the side of Form, as with the hussar regiments, famed of old, whose favorite pastime today seems to consist of parading around in their outmoded armor and assisting at funerals and the consecration of holy images (in “The March of the Hussar and Armored Regiments”). No conscious philosophical underpinnings underlie Kitowicz’s work, but that is his best recommendation. Like Rabelais, he is a natural, a pre-Gombrowiczian and a pre-Bakhtinian, testifying unconsciously to these writers’ insights and to the basic human impulse toward wanting to disrupt and escape from the barriers created by social expectations and the constraints imposed by the physical shape of one’s surroundings, one’s body, and one’s biological urges.

Unlike with Gombrowicz or Bakhtin, the chaos that so often emerges in Kitowicz tends to resolve and right itself either of its own accord—sometimes through a simple change in fashion—or through the judicious intervention of the “proper authorities,” as when Crown Marshal Bieliński puts an end (or, at least, thinks he does) to St. John’s Eve bonfires in the interest of public safety in “Easter Monday and St. John’s Eve.” Sometimes, however, chaos proceeds unabated, as in the unending crash-and-bash competition to be the first to extricate one’s carriage from its parking space after a noble gathering (in “Public Convocations”).

Kitowicz’s vocabulary and diction strike a modern reader as noticeably antique as to style, word choice, and the senses in which many words are used—to put it mildly. At times his writing can best be described as turgid and unfathomable, requiring the translator to be as much a mind-reader as a conveyor of content. Comparison of his style to that of, say, the political reformer Hugo Kołłątaj (1750–1812),³¹ who was writing at about the same time and about many of the same subjects, makes Kitowicz appear to be from an entirely different epoch. Most noticeable is the measured classical precision of Kołłątaj, accessible to any modern-day reader, as compared to Kitowicz’s rambling, picturesque, colloquial, down-home, and frequently opaque prose, requiring constant reference to a dictionary

30 Indeed, Michael Grabowski’s theatrical production (see note 16 above) spotlights exactly this casually dropped remark and transforms it into a major Gombrowicz-like scene.

31 For the Kołłątaj reference, see the critical bibliographical appendix “Reading Kitowicz in Context.”

on eighteenth-century usage, for which Kitowicz himself is often the only source available. The *Description* appears regularly as material for Witold Doroszewski's multi-volume *Słownik języka polskiego* (Dictionary of the Polish Language, 1958–1969). Dernałowicz provides glosses for some 1400 words and phrases used by Kitowicz needing explanation, and many more could have been added. The present translator recognizes that some misreadings may have crept in here and there—for example, in passages relating to the cut, construction, and fabric of eighteenth-century men's fashion, an area in which he is no expert nor ever expects to be. In a few places he has been so bold as to make sense out of a passage that neither he nor anyone among his Polonist consultants could unravel for him. He hopes the reader will forgive him for occasional slips and translational liberties in exchange for his making this fascinating work accessible to a much wider audience than the original author could have ever imagined.

Critical commentary on Kitowicz in languages other than Polish appears to be entirely lacking, and even in Polish, work devoted to him is meager. Matuszewska correctly describes his writing as epistolary in style, meaning among other things that he writes in a familiar, self-effacing, and respectful way to a reader he is constantly striving to inform and, at the same time, entertain, going off freely on tangents, exaggerating, backtracking, and often contradicting himself without special concern.³² In "Of Carriages and Conveyances," the author notes of a highly-seated carriage driver that,

Should he ever fall off such a perch, whether because of a rough road or a head beclouded with too much drink, two prospects awaited him *without fail*: a long stay in bed and visitation by nightmares; or, if he escaped the latter, he never avoided the former.

In other words, two prospects do *not* await him "without fail," but only one. The *Description* is everywhere peppered with exaggerations, inexactitudes, and self-contradictions like this, and with gossipy tidbits about persons unknown to his audience, largely extraneous to the narrative, but adding to its color. In discussing women's headdress in "Women's Wear:

³² Matuszewska, *Proza Jędrzeja Kitowicza*, 70ff.

Headgear, Mantles, and Hoop Skirts,” Kitowicz writes:

Yellow bonnets during August III’s reign were short-lived, being worn for a period of only five or six years under that monarch, except for Lady Radzewska, wife of the Poznań chamberlain, who outlived August III and used an old-style yellow bonnet and everything else old-fashioned as well until her very death.

Too bad that the Poznań chamberlain’s wife was not destined to live long enough to see herself immortalized as a bastion of eighteenth-century sartorial conservatism.

Given that Kitowicz was, as he says at one point, trained in rhetoric, it is noteworthy that one of the few devices he consistently uses is the short simile, as in this passage, from “On Piety,” commenting on the skill required of the promoter of the Rosarian order:

Whoever is able to acquit himself artfully when faced with such rigmarole, which has a tendency to creep into all observances of piety, comes out *like a donut swimming in butter*.

Such comparisons, like this commonplace one, are almost always humorous, as also in the chapter “Carriages and Conveyances” where he compares a carriage driver bundled high atop his parade carriage seat to a haystack and his fore-driver to Bacchus, god of wine and ecstasy, leading the over-the-top cavalcade. Only rarely does a simile begin to resemble something like an extended Homeric comparison, as in this passage from “The *Sich* and the *Haidamaks*”:

Cossacks will truly persecute their brothers only reluctantly, and probably only when the action unfolds under the eye of a Polish commander, but even then, sidewise and at a distance, *as wolves do with pups born of a wolf mother and a dog father: they give them a sniff and then go off, each in their own way*.

Ironical metaphor is another stock item in the author's arsenal of humorous stylistic devices, as when in "The Marshal's Courts" he refers to Warsaw's prostitutes as "busy bees" and "benefactresses," as they offer their services for free in order to avoid prosecution.

A final stylistic device of Kitowicz is that his sentences can be almost never-ending, extended by the piling on of gerundive and participial phrases, so that single sentences can attain the length of entire paragraphs—a stylistic feature which, in the interest of clarity, the translations here make only an occasional attempt to emulate.

Aside from the gruesome chapter "On Torture," from the section on the legal system, in which Kitowicz graphically and dispassionately describes the wrenching of a prisoner's arms out of his or her sockets in order to extract a confession from him or her, almost nothing by Kitowicz has ever been published in English.³³ This, and the colorful, if second-hand, depiction of Cossack life in "The *Sich* and the *Haidamaks*," stand out for their narrative quality.³⁴ At the same time, they are not particularly representative of the overall Kitowiczian manner, in which dry, precise, scholarly description is interlarded with humorous anecdotes, vignettes, sarcastic side remarks, and frequent references—as though they were familiar to everyone—to persons, places, and things (like the size of a Greater Polish cheese), about which today's reader could not possibly have any idea. In specialist courses in older Polish literature at Polish universities, passages from the *Description* are assigned according to which ones are judged to be of interest for their cultural content, social-descriptive interest and, especially, for their narrative quality and literary merit, and those were the primary criteria used in determining the texts included here.³⁵

Kitowicz died on April 3, 1804, in Rzeczyca, reportedly of kidney failure. In his lengthy last will and testament, he recalls no debts of his own,

33 "On Torture" appears at http://www.history.pth.net.pl/files/source_editions/Kitowicz_J_About_tortures.pdf, accessed January 5, 2015. Michael J. Mikoš's anthology *Polish Baroque and Enlightenment Literature* (Bloomington: Slavica Publishers, 1996) contains translated extracts from Kitowicz's *Memoirs* and the *Opis*'s description of public schooling.

34 Kitowicz's matter-of-fact description of the impalement of captured haidamaks in the chapter devoted to them was possibly a model for Henryk Sienkiewicz's description of the impalement of Azja in *Pan Wołodyjowski* (Sir Wołodyjowski).

35 For a list of chapters that were not included according to the translator's estimate of their inherent interest and merit, see the appendix at the end.

and forgives local farmers of theirs. He consigned the care of his two principal manuscripts to the library of the Missionary Brethren in Warsaw, from where his *Description* quickly migrated first to Warsaw's Piarist monastery, thence to the collections of Kraków's Czartoryski Library. The library was moved to Paris in 1849, to return to Kraków in 1876, where the nearly 600-page text lay largely unnoticed until 1930,³⁶ where and where it resides still, as item number 2265/II. Examination of the manuscript reveals just what one would expect from such a fastidious author: a neatly ruled, miniscule, but perfectly legible hand, halfway between longhand and printing (semi-uncial), containing almost no corrections; see the photo-copy below.

In his 1840 edition, Raczyński, who refers to the author only as *ksiądz Kitowicz* (Priest, or Father Kitowicz), recommends him as follows:

By the end of the eighteenth century we had already rejected ... the serious heritage of our forebears. Everything traditional, even down to our dress, had been tossed aside, and would most likely have disappeared into eternal oblivion, had not this passionate citizen, gifted with perspicacity and possessed of an artist's eye, appeared on the scene in time to capture the features of the dying old man in order to preserve his features and pass them on to his grief-stricken posterity.

Grief-stricken over the loss of the Polish eighteenth century though today's readers, some 250 years later, may not still be, with the perspective of time they are probably in an even better position than Kitowicz's original audience to appreciate his panoramic chronicle of life in Poland under August III of Saxony.

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36 In 1930, Michał Janik published a fragment from the *Description* manuscript in the Czartoryski Library in *Pamiętnik Literacki* 27 (1): 128–157.

GLOSSARY OF COMMONLY USED TERMS

This glossary is offered in order to avoid repetitive foot-noting and cross-referencing in the text.

CASTELLAN (KASZTELAN): Castellans were regional officials ranking below voivodes (governors), placed in charge either of a county or a major part of a voivodeship (province). “Seated” castellans, as opposed to lesser ones, had seats in the Senate.

COMPANION-AT-ARMS (TOWARZYSZ): a noble cavalryman, usually assisted by several retainers in his employ.

CROWN (KORONA): the Polish Crown Kingdom, Polish proper as opposed to the Duchy of Lithuania (*Litwa*), the component parts of the Republic of Two Nations (*Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów*), i.e., the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

DRAGOONS (DRAGONIA): members of a light cavalry unit which often dismounted in order to fight.

FORE-RIDER (FORYŚ): a rider mounted on a forward horse of a horse-drawn carriage to help guide it, the driver on the seat having control over the others.

GALLIGASKINS (SZARAWARY): Turkish-inspired loose-fitting knee-length trousers, tucked into one’s boots.

GREATER POLAND (WIELKOPOLSKA): the northwest part of Poland, with its seat traditionally in Poznań, as opposed to *Lesser Poland* (*Małopolska*) in the southeast, with its capital in Kraków.

HAIDAMAK (HAJDAMAK): a member of Ukrainian paramilitary detachments active against the Polish-Lithuanian state in the eighteenth century; in Kitowicz, especially the rapacious members of the Cossack *sich* (encampment).

HAIDUK (HAJDUK): originally a Hungarian-style foot-soldier, in the *Description* it refers to a liveried servant or nobleman’s personal guard dressed as such.

HETMAN: commander-in-chief of the army, whether the Great Crown Hetman or his deputy, the Great Field Hetman. Lithuania had its own Great and Field Hetmans.

HUSSAR (HUSARZ): heavy cavalry units in the Polish-Lithuanian army from the sixteenth to the middle of the eighteenth century.

JANISSARY (JANCZAR): originally a member of the Turkish sultan's elite guard. In the *Description* it refers to a nobleman's retainer or guard dressed as such.

KARABELA: a Turkish or Persian-style saber, shorter and lighter than a Polish saber.

KOŁPAK: a Turkish-inspired Polish-style busby, a medium-tall fur cap with a round cloth top and a tassel on the side.

KONTUSZ: a split-sleeved outer garment used by the Polish nobility, usually worn over the żupan with the arms out of the sleeves.

LESSER POLAND (MAŁOPOLSKA): the southeast part of Poland, with its seat in Kraków, opposed to *Greater Poland (Wielkopolska)*, whose major cities are Poznań and Warsaw.

PAIUK (PAJUK): a Turkish-style liveried servant or guardsman.

PANACHE (BUŃCZUK): an ornamental tuft of hair or feathers decorating a cap or helmet.

POWIAT: a subdivision of a voivodeship, usually translated as "county."

SABER (SZABLA): the curved, Hungarian-inspired sword used by the Polish military and routinely carried at the side of a nobleman.

SASH BELT (PAS): a broad, long, and ornate wool or silk band used for cinching the *kontusz*.

SEJM: the lower house of the legislature, often referred to as the Diet, consisting of nobles elected from their district at regional *sejmiks* or dietines.

SENAT: the upper house of the legislature, having a mainly advisory role to the Sejm.

SENATUS CONCILIUM (SENATE COUNCIL): the *senatus concilium* met for five days after a Sejm was concluded. It received certain foreign emissaries, made certain appointments, and planned business for the following year's Sejm.

STAROSTA: literally "elder," the starosta was an administrative official placed in charge of one or another kind of territorial unit, or *starostwo*.

Depending on the size of the *starostwo*, the position could be quite prestigious and remunerative.

SZLACHTA (NOBILITY): in theory, all Polish nobility were equal before the law and had special privileges under it. In practice, as we repeatedly find, this is far from being the case. Kitowicz recognizes at least the following distinctions: (a) great lords, who were fabulously rich; (b) wealthy nobility; (c) a noble “of a single village”; (d) the petty nobility, essentially farmers possessing a coat of arms; and (e) landless nobility.

TOWARZYSZ (COMRADE-AT-ARMS): a noble in the employ for a certain number of years, and with a certain number of retainers, of the husars or other cavalry

TRIBUNAL (TRYBUNAŁ): a nobles’ court of appeals. The highest tribunals were those of Piotrków and Lublin.

ULAN (UŁAN): a light cavalry officer, typically armed with a lance, saber, and sidearm.

VOIVODESHIP (WOJEWÓDZTWO): a state or province. At its head was the *wojewoda* “voivode,” sometimes also referred to as “palatine,” A voivodeship was subdivided into *powiats*, or counties.

ZŁOTY: the main monetary unit of exchange in eighteenth-century Poland, to which the many other units in circulation were compared. The *złoty* (although the name itself means gold) was minted either in silver, in which case it was also named *tymf* or, if it was of gold (a so-called red, or gold *złoty*), it was worth about eighteen times as much. The “red” *złoty*, or Polish florin or ducat, was in circulation between 1526 and 1831, and was distinct from the regular or Polish *złoty* which, due to inflation and debasement with other metals, had lost much of its value by the late eighteenth century. The system of coins in circulation in the eighteenth century was quite chaotic. Besides the red and the regular *złoty*, the most important coins were the *talar*, worth half a *dukat* (ducat); the *groschen* (groschen), worth 1/30 of a regular *złoty*; the *szóstak* or sixpence, worth 7 1/12 groschen; the *trójak*, worth half as much as that; and the *szeląg* or schilling, worth around 1/3 groschen.

ŻUPAN: a high-collared gown buttoned down the front worn by Polish nobility under the *kontusz*.



JĘDRZEJ KITOWICZ: TO THE READER

With this modest introduction, Father Jędrzej Kitowicz begins his description of the customs and institutions of eighteenth-century Poland under the reign of its last Saxon king, August III.

O.E.S.

As Solomon once said, there is nothing new under the sun. Nevertheless, things in the world constantly do change according to the laws ordained by the Creator, following one after the other in sequence, and they seem to be new, even if they have already come before. And since people prefer new things over old, and since all old things are new for those that have never seen them before, being desirous of satisfying the universal taste, I have resolved to set down for posterity the former customs in Poland as I experienced them under the reigns of King August III and his successor, Stanisław August, in two separate works.³⁵ As we read from earlier histories, those who lived a hundred years before us had entirely different customs from those of today. The very appearance of Poles of former times was very different from that of today, as one may readily see from old-fashioned portraiture and statuary. Those Poles following us a hundred years hence will differ from us just as we differ from those who came before us. May our posterity, for whom I write this work, take a good look at former customs and at contemporary ones, and model themselves after the good ones, and avoid the bad. I beg the forgiveness of my reader for all mistakes in my writing. Should I have the time, I shall want to correct them. If I do not, then be so kind as to forgive me.



³⁵ The second of these two works was never written.

I.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

and

INSTITUTIONS *of* PIETY



I.

RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS IN POLAND

Structured according to the author's penchant for cataloguing, the first chapter in Kitowicz's work is informative regarding the religious sects active in eighteenth-century Poland, and is revealing of Kitowicz himself—a Catholic priest, after all—who turns out to be a reasonably tolerant observer of the various religious faiths practiced around him. He does not much approve of the “dissident” Protestants making inroads into his country, but all the same he grudgingly admits they are sober and serious and have a better work ethic than many natives. He pokes fun at the ardent Catholics who try to stem the flow of Protestant immigration by pledging their fortunes only to lose both the cause and their property. He does let his prejudice show toward the Frankists, whom he insists on calling by their derogatory name “ciapciuchs,” whatever that meant. In Kitowicz's defense, Jakub Frank actually was something of a charlatan.

Historically, Poland was known as a haven for heretics. The eastern reaches of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, in what is now Ukraine and Belarus, gave rise to many religious sects, both Christian and Jewish. The Jewish sect leaving the most indelible imprint on posterity was the Hasids, who are still numerous outside Poland, and their culturally significant sites, many today in Ukraine, are still visited by Hasid pilgrimages from around the world. Kitowicz does not distinguish between them and mainstream Jewry. The Frankists, a once influential but now largely forgotten Jewish breakaway group from Podolia, who emerged in Kitowicz's time around their charismatic leader, Jakub Frank, were in many ways similar to the Hasids, but more radical—for one thing, accepting the New Testament. Kitowicz's rather compressed treatment of them is largely accurate, but does not give justice to the full range of their beliefs or rituals.

Kitowicz's critical cup overflows in his treatment of the so-called deists, by whom in effect he means the promulgators of the progressive ideals of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment (most of whom in Poland were, in fact, men of the cloth). Although he gives a fair account of their beliefs, his open disapproval of them shows more than anything that he does not belong to or really understand the spirit of the age in which he was living and writing, nor the social and political challenges it faced. Rather, he views it as one more stage on the road to cultural degeneration. A group he could have given more attention to here are the so-called Ołędrzy (Hollanders), Mennonites that immigrated to the north of Poland from Holland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

O.E.S.

The dominant faith in Poland under August III was, and is until now, even if cooled in its ardor, Roman Catholicism. The second, existing from time immemorial—and Poland is full of its adherents—is Judaism. A third, recently imported in small numbers from the state of Turkey, is that of the Karaim,³⁶ numerous only in Łuck and elsewhere in Wołyńia and Halicz.³⁷ It is an Old Testament sect. The Karaim recognize only the Bible and reject the Talmud and other statutes of the Jewish rabbis. Supposedly they are the descendants of the Samaritans, often mentioned in the Gospel. Like the Jews, they make their living from trade, but they dress like Poles, or rather like Tatars with beards, and they wear silk yarmulkas beneath their caps. They and the Jews cannot abide one another. Except for Łuck, where as many as eighty households may live, I have never seen them anywhere.

The fourth faith is Lutheranism, and the fifth Calvinism. These two faiths are well represented in larger and smaller towns in Greater Poland,³⁸

36 The Karaim were a Turkic-speaking offshoot of Judaism. Some migrated to Eastern Europe in the twelfth century from the Crimea. Linguistically assimilated, they are an officially recognized ethnic minority in Poland today.

37 The regions Wołyńia and Halicz are in contemporary Ukraine.

38 Greater Poland, with Poznań and Warsaw as principal cities, comprises the northwest and north-central part of the country, and is opposed to Lesser Poland, with Kraków as its capital, in the south and east. The numerous Protestants in the north and in Lithuania would reflect the influx of Germans and Hollanders into East Prussia, along the Baltic coast.

particularly next to the border with Silesia, Brandenburg, and Prussia. There are quite a few Lutheran and Calvinist families especially in Greater Poland and in Lithuania and, besides that, they may be found in the Kraków, Sandomierz, and Lublin districts. During the reign of August III in some towns they had their own churches and prayer houses, as well as schools for young people. However, they did not have the freedom to practice their rites other than in Leszno and Wschowa in Greater Poland, in which two towns the majority of inhabitants consisted of dissidents. Both Lutherans and Calvinists have churches in Leszno. The town of Wschowa, on the basis of its ancient charter of incorporation, does not accept Calvinists;³⁹ there are nothing but Lutherans and Catholics there. Lutherans and Calvinists have churches in many villages and towns, as is permitted by Polish law of old, renewed during the Swedish upheavals⁴⁰ under the protection of those dissident monarchs, whose protection certain persons of the Catholic faith either tried to rescind by tribunal decree or to overturn by violence.

One such person was a certain Bońkowski, Sword-Bearer of Poznań,⁴¹ who rode with the dragoons⁴² at the court of primate Krzysztof Szembek,⁴³ called “Ba-le Ba-le” after a speech quirk of his. Wherever the dissidents were unable to show the deed from the Commonwealth to their church, or *krypel*, as it was called, or if they did have the deed but did not have permission from the bishop to repair it when it became decrepit, but they repaired it anyway—everywhere he would knock it down or demolish it. But if the dissidents resisted by force and did not allow the demolition of their church, either he would summon them before the Crown Tribunal,

39 Wschowa is a town in the west of Poland, not far from Poznań. At the time of its founding it was German, and it would have been inimical to Calvinism. Polish towns in general were incorporated under their founding charters according to German, or so-called Magdeburg law.

40 Kitowicz is mostly referring to the Great Northern War of 1700–1721, conducted against Sweden by a coalition of Peter the Great of Russia, Frederick IV of Denmark-Norway, and August II of Poland who, although a “dissident” (i.e., Protestant) by background, had in fact converted to Catholicism in order to accept the Polish throne.

41 The *Miecznik* (Sword-Bearer) was originally an office at court, responsible for the king’s arsenal. Later, as here, it became a district administrative office.

42 The dragoons were light cavalry who traveled on horseback but usually dismounted in order to do battle.

43 Krzysztof Antoni Szembek, archbishop of Gniezno and primate of the Catholic Church in Poland in the years 1739–1748.

or the dissidents themselves would take him to court for violence done to their church or person, so that the *Registrum arianismi*,⁴⁴ which at the time was in the hands of the Crown Tribunal, to which matters of religion belonged, was full of lawsuits named “Bońkowski vs. these or those dissidents.” For that reason he was sometimes called the plenipotentiary of the Lord Jesus, on which mission of plenipotentiarity he lost his hereditary fortune here on earth in the hope of regaining it on high.

Primate Szembek, just mentioned, a man of great saintliness, and desirous of eradicating heretics, contributed much money in the furtherance of Bońkowski’s work, but without any effect, since others, wanting to have as many people as possible in their towns and villages, accepted dissidents from everywhere. In towns both under the Crown and in those falling under the royal jurisdiction of the dissident Saxon minister,⁴⁵ many Saxon Lutherans settled here who, having a liking for Polish bread and doing quite well by it, were not particularly bothered by not being able to put up prayer houses but just making do with the old ones they were able to maintain; so the ardor of a few was not able to overcome the protection of a larger number.

After Bońkowski’s and Szembek’s deaths, no one quarreled with the dissidents any longer, except for one Kryski, a nobleman from around Wieluń, who also lost his land and fortune over a lawsuit against the Calvinists over a prayer house in Krysek, his hereditary village, which he pursued his entire life, only to be left at the end without his property.

Both Lutheranism and Calvinism became noticeably strengthened in Poland under the reign of August III. At the royal court, most of them, being Saxons at a Saxon court, were Lutherans.⁴⁶ Great lords took a lik-

44 The *Registrum arianismi*, a legal code named after the anti-trinitarian movement of the Arians, or Christian Brethren, was established together with their expulsion from Poland in 1658. It detailed various activities considered seditious to the church, which included blasphemy, keeping mistresses, bearing false witness, not going to confession for long periods of time, sorcery, and other matters. For more information, see the chapter “The Crown Tribunals.” It was discontinued only after August III’s death in 1775.

45 The Crown refers to Poland proper, as distinct from Lithuania, in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Heinrich von Brühl, prime minister of Poland, favorite of King August III and effectively his plenipotentiary in Poland, may have been Lutheran, but he was also a Freemason and could also probably have qualified under Kitowicz’s definition as a “deist” (see further below).

46 As noted previously, August III himself was Catholic, having converted in 1712 with an eye toward acceding to the Polish throne.

ing to these people who wanted to make a living in a foreign country, and who comported themselves more soberly, modestly, and industriously than Poles. At last even bishops and prelates, casting aside their former prejudices, began placing dissidents among their staff. And so these people of a different faith, no longer finding resistance from any side, but instead finding a pleasant reception among the foremost people, squeezed into Poland wherever they could, and multiplied.

The sixth faith is Mohammedanism, which has its nest in Lithuania, having been introduced there by Prince Witold of Lithuania,⁴⁷ who brought several dozen Tatar families from the Crimean Peninsula and set them up there, granting them hereditary rights to certain lands, which they hold to this day.

The seventh faith is Greek schismatic,⁴⁸ which could be found under the reign of August III in Drohiczyn in the Podlasie region, on the estates of the Śluck princes of the Radziwiłłs, and in various places around Lithuania and Ruthenia.⁴⁹ The eighth faith is that of the Philippians,⁵⁰ who are found only in Ruthenia, and in small numbers. It is supposedly a branch of the Quakers, of whom more anon. The ninth faith is that of the Manists, or Quakers,⁵¹ who are located around Gdańsk and in Gdańsk itself.

The tenth faith is that of the Freemasons, if that company can be called a faith, because those who are Freemasons commonly say that their group belongs to no faith but is merely a confraternity. They accept into it people of any faith and of various social status, even men of the cloth, as long as they have the requisite traits of belief. But these traits, as well as the duties of the confraternity, are kept locked in deep secret, the mysteries of which have not yet come to light, although in various countries vigorous official inquiries have been instigated. The Freemasons use among them-

47 In 1379, Lithuanian Prince Vytautas (Witold) brought back with him to Lithuania a number of Muslim prisoners captured in a campaign in the Crimean peninsula. A fair number settled in Poland in the northeast Suwałki region.

48 Here, "Greek schismatics" refers to members of the Greek Orthodox faith.

49 Ruthenia refers more or less to present-day Belarus.

50 The Philippians (named after their priest Philip) were a small offshoot of Russian Orthodox Old Believers, who rejected church hierarchy, avoided the draft, shunned marriage, and practiced ritual suicide. They had nothing to do with the Quakers, about whom Kitowicz has essentially nothing to say.

51 Kitowicz may be mixing up the Manists, a cult of ancestor worshippers, and the Quakers, or Friends, with Dutch Mennonites.

selves unknown signs according to which one recognizes another without saying a word about whether they are Freemasons, and which a third Freemason among them might not even recognize. This sect, or rather confraternity, was brought to Poland from Paris by Andrzej Mokronowski, who was voivode of Mazowsze when he died.

When this sect spread among gentlemen in Warsaw, and none of its adherents wanted to freely admit of belonging to it, the bishop of Warsaw's curia, not having anyone to bring suit against, and not knowing for what reason, merely published an edict to the priesthood to the effect that true believers should be warned from the pulpit about the appearance of this new sect and to guard themselves against it, since it must be evil, since it does not want to reveal itself publicly, for whatever is good does not avoid the light. The church hierarchy, having made this plea from the pulpit out of pastoral concern for the sheep of their flock, at last grew quiet, not knowing against whom to rail or why. In the meantime, the Freemasons increased their numbers in secret—sometimes larger, sometimes smaller—according to how many joined it or fell away. It is a matter worthy of admiration that out of so many people of so many social classes, in so many different countries and under so much pressure from state authorities, not a single Freemason could be found who would reveal the mysteries of the brotherhood. Even those who left it died preserving its carefully guarded secrets. Mokronowski himself, the leader of the Polish Freemasons, who died in Warsaw a Catholic with a Catholic ceremony launching his soul along the pathway to salvation, after confessing and receiving the viaticum and the last unction, and speaking these last words to those present: "Now I will die in peace, since I have become reconciled with the Lord"—even he revealed not a word about the Freemasons, even though he never concealed that in his younger days he had belonged to them.

Toward the end of August III's reign, an eleventh sect arrived in Poland, the Frankists. Their origin was as follows: a wealthy Jew from Turkey by the name of Frank,⁵² being a great reader of the Bible, by applying

52 Jakub Frank (1726–1791), born Jakub Leibowicz, founder of a breakaway Jewish mystical sect, referred to today as Frankism, incorporating certain elements of Christianity along with a Manichean streak, including the practice of orgiastic ritual. Frank claimed to be the reincarnation of the self-proclaimed Messiah rabbi Sabbatai Zevi (1626–1676), to whose movement Frank at first belonged. One can see a certain revival of interest in the person of Frank and

all the prophecies and their repercussions among the Jewish people, became convinced that the Messiah predicted by the prophets had already arrived, and that therefore the need for the Old Testament had come to an end, and that a new law, absolutely necessary for salvation, had shone its light upon him, by which (so he said) he was so dazzled as to both mind and will, that he could not under any circumstance continue in his former Jewish error. He confided about this divine enlightenment to several of his friends, and they in turn attracted more such Jews to themselves, until a dozen or so families left Turkey for Poland, since to him it seemed dangerous for them to change religions there. He first appeared in the diocese of Kiev, and then in Łuck, attracting greater and greater numbers of Jews to his belief. Being very wealthy, he nourished and looked after the needs of all of his proselytes. For two years these new believers did not become baptized, nor did they keep to the Old Testament either, as the result of which they were often persecuted by the Jews. They were eventually summoned to the bishops' ecclesiastical court, first to the one in Kiev, and then to the one in Łuck.

The bishops gathered to discuss this matter many times over. However, Frank and his adherents, being present at these courts, or rather disputations, made no final commitment in the direction of the Christian faith, but only maintained that the Messiah had already arrived here on earth. He mainly railed against the falsity of Talmudic teaching, for which reason at first members of this group were referred to as Anti-Talmudists. However, since they professed neither Judaism nor Christianity, but something somewhere in between, they were given a threefold choice: either accept Christianity, return to Judaism, or leave the country.

Frank, for whom the Polish land seemed to be the most propitious for his intentions, opted for baptism, which he accepted along with his entire group of followers, amounting to several hundred souls in all.⁵³ Many noblemen in Ruthenia, and in the Kraków and Sandomierz districts, accepted these newly baptized souls into their towns out of attachment to the holy Catholic faith, giving them homesteads and land bought from

his movement in Olga Tokarczuk's recent novel *Księgi jacobowe* (Books of Jacob) (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2014), and in the 2011 feature-length film *Dass* by Adrian Panek.

53 Frank was later baptized a second time in Warsaw, with August III himself serving as godfather, a detail Kitowicz omits.

both Jews and Catholics. Jews, for their part, for reason of the contempt shown to the Old Testament through their acceptance of the cross, called them *ciapciuchs*, which supposedly means the same thing as rascallions.⁵⁴ Frank, being in need of greater generosity and more comfortable circumstances for himself over others, along with those who, having neither wives nor land, had gathered around him and formed his retinue, approached the king. He entered Warsaw in a six-horse carriage, which he always used whenever he appeared in public, surrounded by his retinue, armed with sabers and spears. The king, seeing in him a man who had done much to multiply the Catholic faith in such a brief period of time, and one who was capable of doing even more in the future, gave him an audience (which for August III was doing Frank a great honor), and assured him of his continued protection and guarantee of comfortable abode, and he instantly ordered that he and his retinue be given food and lodging out of his own treasury.

These *ciapciuchs* (for this is the way I will refer to them henceforward) were set up in the parish of the Missionary Brethren, behind the Missionary garden, whiling away their time in inactivity for several weeks, as if awaiting further instructions regarding their status from his royal majesty, and supposedly learning more perfectly about their newly accepted teaching of Christ.

The landlord where Frank was staying, observing the *ciapciuchs* visiting him at all hours, shutting themselves up with him, staying for a long time, and later leaving together after the visit was over, was overcome by curiosity to learn what they and Frank were up to. Peering through a crack he had made into the room in which they were gathered, he saw Frank seated on a chair elevated high above the others, making prophecies, while the other *ciapciuchs* gathered around him in a circle, fell to their knees, and beat their foreheads against the ground.

Having had a good look at these gatherings several times, and having shown them to several other Catholics for better evidence, the landlord let the Missionary Brethren know about what he had seen. Śliwicki, the Missionary Inspector, immediately informed the king. The king had

54 It seems possible that the word *ciapciuch*, used by Kitowicz derogatorily, is based on the name of Sabbatai Zevi (in Polish, *Szabtaj Cwi* or *Sabataj Cwi*); see note 18 above.

Frank arrested and taken to the Missionaries along with several other leading *ciapciuchs*, in order to examine them as to their faith and intentions, without, however, causing any unpleasantness to the other *ciapciuchs*, who were left in their accommodations. They spent some two weeks being examined by the Missionary Brethren. The Brethren were unable to get anything out of Frank except that he believed that, besides Christ, whose faith he accepts and keeps along with the others, according to the teachings taken from the Old Testament there is to be a second Messiah who will convert to his belief all Jews. He illustrated this belief with the words taken from Psalm 86: "*Homo et homo natus est in ea*,"⁵⁵ in which belief he remained steadfast. As to whether he considered himself to be this second Messiah, he refused to commit himself one way or the other. The other *ciapciuchs*, when examined one by one, also professed to believe in Catholicism as the one true faith, just as Frank had, to which they merely added that they had kneeled and made obeisance before Frank because on several occasions they had seen a brightness appear like a flame above his head and, besides that, they took him for a prophet who has turned their erroneous faith toward the true one.

The court, being apprised from these inquiries that Frank had the ability to seduce people into following him, in order to deprive him of the opportunity to do so, sent him to Częstochowa and settled him there along with his wife and daughter, at his own cost, for which he had sufficient funds from his business interests that he still maintained in Turkey, from which he derived a yearly income.⁵⁶ His wife was so delicate or, shall we say, refined, that she never allowed herself to take sustenance to her lips from her own hand, but had another woman feed her just as one would feed a small child. However, in Częstochowa these pretensions fell away, and she ate thenceforward from her own hand, and took care of her other minor needs on her own. Being deprived of their leader, the other *ciapciuchs*, released by the king to do so, dispersed in various directions.⁵⁷

55 "Generation after generation has been born in the land of Zion."

56 In other words, he and his family were placed under house arrest in the Jasna Góra monastery in Częstochowa.

57 For the most part, they merged into Polish upper- and middle-class society. Many became Freemasons.

When later, under Stanisław August, turmoil arose in the country,⁵⁸ many of them moved to Warsaw. I will describe their religion under that king when I write about the beliefs and customs under his reign. Here I will finish my portrait of the *ciapciuchs* by describing what they were like during the time of August III. Having settled in various towns, they lived in small communities and presented themselves as Christians, professing the faith of Christ without any intrusions from the Old Testament, or at least they were not suspected of any mixing up of the Old and New Testaments. Frank, their leader, sat in Częstochowa with his wife and daughter until the year 1772 when, after the voluntary withdrawal of the confederates from that fortress, the Muscovites entered. The Muscovite General Prince Gallitsin, whether at the behest of the king or on his own account, let Frank go. No longer daring to tarry in Poland, where his messianic reputation had become irreparably tarnished, Frank moved first to Silesia and from there to Frankfurt on the Oder.⁵⁹

The twelfth faith, or rather the utter lack of faith, may be referred to as deism. Deists reject the teaching of revelation and despise all religions equally, being of the opinion that the light of reason is sufficient for teaching man the difference between good and evil. But there are as many reasons as there are human heads, each one different in its opinion and inclinations one from the other, so that a deist acts in accordance with how his reason dictates, enticed either by passion or self-interest, with no fear of the future afterlife.

There were deists in Poland then as in all former times, but because in Poland the laws in effect from olden times were so severe for the wayward, that is, for blasphemers of the Catholic religion or for those not openly professing it, that even though a person had accepted the Catholic faith, whether by birth or adoption, even if in his heart he was a deist—that is, a man without faith—no one dared to come out and say so, and so he

58 Kitowicz is referring to the Bar Confederacy of 1768–1772, an armed alliance of Polish noblemen, in which he had taken part, against Catherine the Great and the Russian-installed king, Stanisław August Poniatowski.

59 It was actually the Russian general Bibikov who occupied Częstochowa and released Frank. Frank ended up in Offenbach, Germany, receiving financial support from followers in Poland and Moravia. After his death in 1792 his daughter, Ewa, took over as head of the sect, but its influence dwindled during the Napoleonic Wars. Ewa died in Offenbach in 1816, effectively bringing an end to the Frankists.

would try, by observing in his behavior the external trappings of religion, to pass for a person having religion, because the *Registrum arianismi* (Aryan Register), which was adhered to in the tribunals, and was particularly concerned with affairs directed against God and the Holy Catholic Faith, was frightening for any blasphemer or despiser of the lessons of faith, since it normally prescribed death for those who were accused and convicted.⁶⁰

Toward the end of the reign of August III, whose court was composed of nothing but dissidents, with a Lutheran prime minister at the head, the *Registrum arianismi* ceased to be frightening, since the protection of that minister sheltered all mockers of the Catholic faith. The young people of Poland, who were usually sent abroad in order to polish their manners and minds, returned to the country infected with deism and libertinism, while the masters used for educating young lords in our own country were most often foreigners who, for reason of their lack of talent and bad habits, found neither sustenance nor respect in their own country. Most often they were Frenchmen, who by nature are frivolous in matters of religion, as Barclay⁶¹ wrote about them a long time ago, saying “*Credunt quod volunt, rident quod colunt.*”⁶² Such teachers of little piety infused their charges with their dissipated opinions, promoted the point of honor as the chief aim of a worthy man, while presenting fear of the courtroom and of damnation after death as made-up scarecrows for the common mob in order to keep them in submission, for otherwise they would not know how to respect virtue, but only out of the fear of retribution for committing offenses against it. To be a virtuous man, according to them, was to recognize God as the Creator and ruler over all things, to be faithful to one’s king, to love one’s country, to do harm to no one (as long as one does not harm oneself), and in all matters be heedful of the dignity of one’s social status—at least superficially, if one’s nature cannot guide one to do so internally.

Such is the entire summary, or collection, of the teachings and commandments of the deists that had to be adhered to. But the secrets of the essence of the godhead, in which one has to believe in order to be saved;

60 This 150-word sentence illustrates the typical Kitowiczian run-on style, in which what starts out as a sentence can grow by add-ons into an entire paragraph.

61 John Barclay (1734–1798), Scottish theologian. This is, for Kitowicz, a rather uncharacteristic scholarly reference.

62 “They believe what they want, and laugh at what they honor.”

the need to honor God both internally and externally; the sacraments, fasts, and other mortifications of the flesh; the orders of priests and the various kinds of religious services—in short all church teachings about God and the customary means of his worship—they considered these to be either completely unnecessary or, at least, so unimportant as to be so unnecessary that a pure and powerful intellect does not need to be convinced of them. With such opinions, often heard from their tutors, pupils became infected upon completing their education, having read the works of Voltaire, Rousseau, Spinoza, and other godless writers. Joining the ranks of other such dissipated people, they formed the ranks of the accomplished deist.

But this blight during the reign of August III, that saintly lord, was not yet as bold as it soon worked out to be, but covered itself in the cloak of orthodoxy and did not dare to mock anything that belonged to religion. It was to be found not only among the gentry, but also to an extent among the major nobility and richer merchants who, for reason of their sufficiency of fortune, in emulation of the gentry liked to send their children away to be educated. In sum, deism became disseminated in Poland by teachers, by young men sent abroad for their education, and by books.





2 .

ON PIETY

This chapter, together with the following two, deals with the forms that piety took in the middle of eighteenth-century Poland. Kitowicz draws a distinction between the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church (which he considers to be immutable, and therefore needing no commentary) and the outward forms expressing these teachings as adopted by the people, which change with the times (and probably for the worse, he estimates). Being a priest himself, Kitowicz is in a good position to make observations on the religious life of the faithful. He might just as well not have worried that many of the forms of piety of his day, as he sees them, would wither away and be forgotten, for most of what he describes in this chapter is more or less what the present-day reader would imagine them to be on the basis of contemporary custom. Still, this chapter is an excellent eyewitness description of the religious societies of the day, especially the Society of the Rosary, one of many pious institutions Kitowicz describes by way of documenting the special esteem in which the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, is held, above all in Poland. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of fasting practices, a rather scathing assessment of women "devotiates," and a description of the mons pietatis (mountain of piety), an early endowment fund for helping the needy. Missing from Kitowicz's descriptions of pious religious practice in Poland are the still-popular lengthy pilgrimages to various religious shrines, one of the earliest and most famous of which, from Warsaw to Jasna Góra monastery in Częstochowa, a distance of 243 kilometers, has been covered on foot regularly since 1711, and would have been known well by our author. Indeed, the Warsaw Pilgrimage of today passes through Kitowicz's home parish in Rzeczyca.

O.E.S.

I have just described for the Reader the faiths, or religions, that could be found in Poland under the reign of August III. Since in this kingdom the Catholic faith rules supreme, whose essence is piety and teachings about God, and since that teaching is uniform and immutable throughout the Church, and was and will be throughout all the ages in Christ's true Church, which is the Roman Catholic Church alone, I have nothing to say about its teachings. However, as for the matter of piety, it does vary among the people according to circumstances, sometimes growing stronger and at other times weaker, and for that reason there is something to write about regarding Catholic piety during the time of August III; and it seems to me that a description of the piety exhibited in former times will be instructive to the Poles of future days.

We may begin with the ordinary everyday services that were conducted in all of the churches. These took place quite regularly, particularly in the larger towns, with the celebration of the Most Holy Sacrament; with sermons and processions in the church; and with proclamations by the priests accompanied by kettledrums and trumpeters in the evening outside the church, announcing which service was to be conducted on the following day, to which services throngs of the faithful of both sexes would come, including great lords and ladies. In Jesuit churches every day at seven o'clock in the morning mass would be celebrated with the exposition of the Sacrament of the Lord's Body in a celebratory vessel, singing before the mass the hymn *O salutaris Hostia* (O saving sacrifice) from the last two verses of the hymn for Corpus Christi contained in the priest's missal, with the priest then giving the sign of the cross over the vessel. After mass the priest would sing O Holy God together with the people and then repeat three times the *Salvum fac* (Lord save), which is at the end of the familiar hymn *Te Deum Laudamus* (We praise you Lord). In parting he would begin to chant the prayer *Fiant Domine* (Grant, O Lord), which the people would then join and finish. At the words "*regionem islam*" (the Islamic land) the priest would make the sign of the cross a second time and place the vessel with the Host back into the ciborium.⁶³ Most people coming to mass were common folk. If any more distinguished folk were

63 *ciborium*: a covered container used to store the consecrated host of the sacrament of Holy Communion.

among them, they would come from among the less wealthy, who were able to rise early. Other lords and ladies preferred to sleep late and to show themselves dressed in their finery, and they would not arrive at church any earlier than for great mass just before noon.

In addition to festive services, both lords and the common folk would gather for regular parish services on every holiday and on every Sunday for the sung mass and the sermon, as well as for vespers. Wherever there was a better sermonizer there would be a larger crowd, more than the church could hold. Not only on holy days, but also on ordinary days of the week, it was not easy for anyone not otherwise engaged to skip holy mass. The wealthier nobility living in the countryside, who had permission from church authorities to build their own chapels, kept priests who would conduct daily holy mass for the lords along with their less busy servants, and in the evening everyone would gather in the chapel for a service, usually consisting of various litanies, songs, and prayers, after which the priest would sprinkle people with holy water as they left. On more festive holidays, people would congregate at the parish church for the service, or go to some nearer one, for example to a cloister, where services were generally held more often than in the parish church. If a nobleman did not have a priest on staff, he would conduct the evening service for his household staff himself, but he would not conduct morning services for them, for his people would already be busy about their own chores earlier than the lord himself would have risen. Easter confession and communion were received by everyone, including the great lords.

Religious Societies

Religious societies, brought to Poland of old with the aim of increasing the glorification of the Lord, were held in great esteem, the most renowned of which was, especially among students in both Jesuit and Piarist schools, the congregation of the *Sodalitas Mariana* (Fellowship of Mary). It was divided into a greater order for philosophers and theologians and a lesser one for students in the lower grades. Each had its own prefect, who on given holidays would lead his congregation of *sodales* (followers). They would recite lines from the Office of the Immaculate Conception, after which the priest prefect would deliver an exhortation to the sodales, urging them to lead a

blameless life and to safeguard the honor of the Holy Mother of God. Then they would be examined as to whether one or another sodalis might have committed some major transgression who, if such came to light, would be excluded not only from the congregation but from the school itself.

Banishment from school was as terrifying for students as banishment from the church would have been, for everyone shunned a banished person, just as though he had been officially excommunicated. Transgressions meriting banishment included: transferring unannounced from one school to another in the school year, which was possible in certain towns where there were both Piarist and Jesuit schools; night-time gallivanting and carousing about taverns, after ignoring two warnings or school punishments; or doing mischief to a young lady or carrying on with a married woman, as proved by her husband. The last two infractions were not preceded by any gradation of admonition but were punished by outright banishment, with a hundred lashes added, as long as the culprit could be caught. Such transgressions, rare as they were, could befall senior tutors teaching lower-level students, themselves being students. These were usually grown men of full mustache, who treated the schools not so much as a place of study as a means of livelihood and who, after completing a course in philosophy and theology, would begin it over again, taking a certificate of good behavior from one school and transferring it to the next.

For minor infractions, such as not fulfilling the obligations of a sodalis, immodest behavior during congregations, or infrequent attendance at them, younger sodales were punished by demotion from a sodalis to a *tiro*. A sodalis was a fellow who was officially listed in the register of sodales, and who had made his profession of faith in the presence of the entire congregation. This consisted of a certain list of obligations which every sodalis was committed to doing his utmost to fulfill, by serving the Most Holy Virgin both as to worship and as to leading a blameless life. A tiro was a novitiate who had only just joined the congregation and who had before him a certain period of service and learning the duties of the Fellowship. At congregations the sodales sat on benches, while the tiros either stood in the midst of the oratorium or, if they had some stripe against them, kneeled. It was a great disgrace for a sodalis to be dislodged from his bench and placed amongst the ranks of the standing tiros or, even worse, among the kneeling ones.

The Fellowship of Mary had great standing among the students. There was no greater oath than “*Uti sum sodalis Marianus!*” (“For I am a Fellow of Mary!”), nor any greater condemnation of frivolity or impiety than “He’s a Fellow of Mary, but dissolute and irreligious nonetheless.” Such holy fervor played a great role in pointing school-age youth toward a religious life. The Fellowship of Mary was open not only to school-boys but to adults as well. For example, the members of the bar of the Lublin Tribunal and of the magistrate’s office of that town were members, except that they did not mix with students or with each other. The bar and the magistrate each had its own congregation.

The Reader will forgive me for expounding at length on the Fellowship of Mary, for this society went out of fashion along with the disbanding of the Jesuit order.⁶⁴ Although it still exists among the Piarists, it no longer enjoys the same esteem, and so I wanted to leave some record of it in my writing.

The Society of Scholars

Second in importance after the Fellowship of Mary was the Society of Letters, or Scholars. This society consisted of townsfolk exclusively, and of men sufficiently learned that they were able to read from the church hymnal from which they sang on holy days, normally in the parish church. In addition, they placed votives before the altar, for which they provided candles and other necessities, along with a fund providing a stipend to the priest for holding these sung masses. Because they could read and, what is more, in Latin, even though many of them did not understand the language, they called their society “literary,” and themselves “literati.” To be sure, there were among them many who really were men of letters, including men from the local magistrate’s office.

Other common societies were open to members of both sexes. This included the Societies of the Rosary, of the Scapular, of the Sacred Heart of

64 The Jesuit order (*Societas Jesu*, Society of Jesus), established as a teaching and charitable order by St. Ignatius of Loyola (ca. 1491–1556), was suppressed in 1773 by Pope Clement XIV, to be restored by Pius VII in 1814. In the interim, the progressive and non-sectarian Komisja Edukacji Narodowej (Commission of National Education), said to be Europe’s first ministry of national education, was established under king Stanisław August Poniatowski.

the Lord Jesus, of the Consolation of the Most Holy Virgin, of the Holy Spirit, of Saint Roch, Saint Barbara, and very many other societies named after various saints.

The Societies of the Rosary and of the Scapular were the most numerous; it was difficult to find anyone who was not a member of either one or the other. The Rosarians seemed to flourish especially well in larger and smaller towns, but they could also be found in some villages. The Dominican Friars, who sponsored this society, had been granted the exclusive privilege by the Apostolic See, I do not know how long ago, to organize this society, although the Dominicans could grant dispensation to a society of congregants that wanted to establish itself within a church of a different, non-Dominican ordination.⁶⁵ In every Dominican church the Society of the Rosary is established together with the foundation of the cloister, and in public services it occupies first place in the monastery choir.

When the brothers and sisters sing the Rosary, the priest assigned to them, their promotor, always officiates, initiating the Rosary from the pulpit and explaining out of a book the secrets of the life, martyrdom, and resurrection of Christ, of which the Rosary is composed. After each mystery is explained, the society sings first Our Father, then ten Hail Marys, then Glory to the Father, and finally I Believe in God the Father,⁶⁶ followed by a litany of recitations and responses, the service ending with an appropriate church hymn.

The Rosary itself consists of two kinds. One is called the Rosary of the Most Holy Virgin, the other the Rosary of Jesus. The service in one instance and the other is the same, except that when singing the Rosary of Jesus in place of "Hail, Mary" they sing ten times "Jesus, son of David, have mercy upon us," followed by a litany relating to Jesus.

The office of the promotor of the Rosary occupies an esteemed position among the Dominicans, second only to the lecturers in the school, that is, the teachers, having earned this office by virtue of great service to the order. He receives no salary from the cloister, as the professors do, but

65 The origin of the Rosary is associated with St. Dominic (ca. 1170–1221), founder of the Dominican order, which was instrumental in spreading the practice of the Rosary and the doctrine of its power.

66 *Our Father*: The Lord's Prayer. *Hail Mary*: a prayer asking for the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, lying at the basis of the Rosary. *I believe in God the Father*: the Apostles' Creed.

as a perquisite he receives an extra portion in the dining hall, known as a *pietantia*. Besides this, as long as he is diligent in his office, he receives frequent meals and gifts from his brother and sister Rosarians. Such diligence consists in always arriving first in the pulpit, before the brothers and sisters gather to recite the Rosary; in following careful procedures when conducting the election of elders; in knowing how to distribute favors when conferring seniority among the members without causing offense; and in knowing to whom to yield privilege of place according to social distinctions when forming public processions. Whoever is able to acquit himself artfully when faced with such rigmarole, which has a tendency to creep into all observances of piety, comes out like a donut swimming in butter. In other, non-Dominican churches, mainly in villages, where they do not hold elections to office or hold Rosary processions, but simply have the Rosary sung by lads and lasses who know nothing of having pious respect for the priest promotor, this office is discharged by a rector or vicar, if such exists or, if not, then by the organist or some other church functionary.

As to the service itself, even the great lords and ladies, along with the lesser nobility, were unashamed to participate in the reading of the Rosary, and some of the lesser nobility even sang along with the rest. The great lords and ladies would stand for election to the offices of Rosary Protector or Rosary Counsellor, there being no other offices than those available for their confraternity, as they called it. More outstanding town citizens considered it an honor to be put forward as Rosary priors, cantors, treasurers, and so forth. The princess Czartoryski, wife of the Ruthenian voivode, as well as the Lithuanian princess, wife of the vice chancellor, also a Czartoryski, were often seen at Rosary readings along with their daughters, sitting in the benches alongside other Rosarian sisters of varying social status. It is true that they did not participate in the singing, but they recited from their breviaries and beads.

The Rosary beads served to keep track of prayers as they were shifted one by one on the string from one end to the other, each time chanting either Our Father or Hail Mary. The beads indicating Our Father were larger, while the ones indicating Hail Mary were smaller, so that the reciter or singer of the Rosary had no need to keep track of the number and was able to give his or her full attention to the service, being able to tell from the

size of the beads what was to follow. Both ends of the string were fastened together with larger beads forming a cross from which a silver or brass pendant hung, according to individual taste. These beads had to be blessed and rubbed against an image of the Most Holy Virgin if they were to have the power to obtain indulgences for the bearer, a power vested not only in the ceremony of the Rosary but in the beads themselves. Persons carrying the Rosary in their pockets would receive fewer indulgences than people who wore them on their belt. And so, in order to receive the maximum number of indulgences, they were worn on the belt by many people, ranging from the infirm to the soldiers of the royal armored cavalry stationed in Krzepice and Wieruszów, whom the service honoring The Mother of God of Jasna Góra, famous for her miracles, touched particularly.⁶⁷

Rosary processions took place two times a year, on the Holiday of the Rosary and on the Holiday of the Visitation of the Most Holy Virgin. These processions took place only in towns in which the Dominicans were situated. They led from one Dominican church to some other fairly distant one, in order to stretch out more satisfactorily the processional parade and make it appear all the grander. After the procession had ended, the brothers and sisters, out of a common pool of contributions, held a feast in honor of those who had contributed the most to the procession, such as the elder brothers; the marshals, whose duty was to keep the procession orderly by parading in front of it with stout long staffs decorated in gold and other colors; and the flag-bearers, both men and women, who carried the banners of the brotherhood, made of light silk in imitation of regimental banners. Also taking part in the feast were all those whose generosity had contributed to the cost of putting it on. Coming out best at this feast were the priest prior and the priest promotor, the elder brothers and the younger sisters. The rest of the group played the role more of servers than participants. Such feasts were held only in larger towns. The only outsiders to participate in it were members of town guilds, typically cobblers and butchers, who sought in such feasts some kind of increased respect for their lowly estate.

67 The image of the Mother of God in the Jasna Góra monastery in Częstochowa (the "Black Madonna") is Poland's most venerated religious icon. The relief of the monastery from the Swedish siege in 1655 was ascribed to her miracle-working powers, and her image, said to ward off death, was (and to an extent still is) worn into battle by Polish soldiers.

Society of the Scapular

The Society of the Scapular also attracted to itself a great many people of varying social estate, although it had no service differing in any important respect from the normal church service, nor any processions or feasts. Their duties were: to fast on Wednesdays and to wear a scapular over their bare body. For it was difficult for a person to wear it that way, instead of over a shirt, in view of the lice infesting it.⁶⁸ A scapular consisted of two pieces of fabric sewn together and bearing the names Mary and Jesus. These two pieces, which could reach as far down as the end of the arm, were bound together by two ribbons or tapes hanging down over the shoulders, one over the front and the other over the back. Only women wore it that way, who would fashion that part of their costume out of a scapular by using silken threads and wearing it over a shirt, lacing it shut in front but leaving it open in back over the shoulder blades, while men, especially rustics, wore the scapular tossed right-across-left over the shoulder so that it not fall off their shoulders like the woman's, and so that it not interfere with their work. In other words, they wore it like a soldier wears a cartridge belt. Whoever did not want to fast on Wednesday had the option of reciting Our Father seven times, Hail Mary seven times, and I Believe in God the Father once. The brotherhood had no obligations other than this.

I have described for the Reader the smallest details of the most important societies so that memory of them might be left to posterity in case with time they die out, as can probably be predicted from the increasing lack of piety spreading across the Polish nation.

On Private and Voluntary Fasting

Chief among private fasts was one held on Wednesdays, and it was observed by very many worshippers, inasmuch as it was privileged by two brotherhoods: the Society of the Scapular and the Society under the Protection of Saint Joseph. This fast could be found even in the great house-

⁶⁸ No explanation is offered for why the scapulars should be infested with *gad* (vermin), as he puts it, which must have meant lice.

holds, and among those of lesser fortune and condition it was observed by almost everyone, who limited their fare to food prepared in butter.⁶⁹ Some observed it for the remission of sins, while others joined worldly interests to spiritual ones, looking to save on the cost of a capon or roast.

Next in importance after Wednesday was Saturday, observed by many men and women devotiates,⁷⁰ who would limit themselves to fasting foods prepared in olive or other oil; some would dine exclusively on dry food. Such fasting did not arise from the practice of any society but strictly out of an individual's decision or vow, for which many would forego eating with buttered fare on Friday,⁷¹ and then carry the custom over to Saturday as well, without even being compelled to.

Also in wide use were novenas, septenas, and quindenias, which were fasts either preceding some saint's day, or following some saint's day up until some other one that ordinarily called for a service with one day of fasting during the week, the purpose being to receive God's grace through the power of his saint, either in general or in connection with some outcome that an individual wished to bring about. The vagueness of my general description of these fasts will be understood from the particulars of their explication. For example, a person searching for comfort in his grief, or for help in making a problematic career decision, would fast for the nine Tuesdays either before or after Saint Anthony of Padua's day in reverence of that saint, to which those who were able (such as those residing in towns) on each Tuesday would tack on confession and take communion—and this was called a novena. That holy miracle-worker could also be summoned in a different and quicker way. In certain emergency situations—when someone had lost money, a horse, or some other item, or if someone sensed himself to be in the presence of imminent misfortune, he would give alms to the friars of St. Francis, in return for which they would immediately go before the image of Saint Anthony and sing the hymn "*Si quaeris miracula*" (If thou seekest miracles)⁷² along with the verse and prayer going with that hymn, and it very often happened that

69 Butter, as opposed, say, to lard, would not have been a fasting food, although butter itself is considered to be off limits by the more conservative.

70 See the following section "Tertiary Orders and Devotiates."

71 Friday being the normal fast day.

72 The beginning of a popular intercessory prayer to Saint Anthony as a wonder-worker.

the desired effect was achieved almost immediately upon the singing of the following hymn.

By a septena was meant seven Wednesdays of fasting: whether devoted to Saint Joseph for protection against sudden death, or to Saint Anne or some other saint, with the addition of confession and communion on the same day. A quindena was five Fridays with stricter fasting than ordinary, or even going entirely without food. Such a quindena, along with confession and communion, was directed most often to Saint Ignatius by wives wishing to have children or by ones already pregnant hoping for a successful birth. Fasting on five Fridays, called "March Fridays," was directed by very many persons to the Sacred Heart of the Lord Jesus, and it was observed just as strictly as the quindena described just above. It began with the first Friday in March and continued uninterruptedly, with a service being conducted on each of these March Fridays in the churches of the Piarist friars, consisting of a sung votive along with the exposition of the Most Holy Sacrament, a sermon, and a procession around the church, to which would be added a similar service on the second Sunday after Easter, in which not only those who belonged to the Society of the Sacred Heart took part, but also those who were not members.

I have mentioned here only voluntary fasts, without mentioning fasting by commandment, for the latter does not fall under devotion but rather belongs to obligation.

Tertiary Orders and Devotiates

In addition to the various types of devotional worship described above were the not uncommonly-practiced tertiary orders and their adherents. Belonging to a tertiary order meant adopting a certain monastic order, but without becoming a monk or nun in it. Requirements consisted of wearing beneath one's lay clothing the belt of the order which one had adopted, or possibly a gown of the order's color, or maybe a caftan thin as a shirt of some cut, matching in color that of one's chosen order, in addition to which they bore the obligation—although not at the cost of committing a sin—of reciting certain prayers, observing certain fasts, making contributions to the order of one's choice according to one's ability, promoting the honor of the holy patriarch; and encouraging others to do the same. In ex-

change for which a male or female member of a tertiary order received the spiritual benefits accruing to the chosen order and, after death, they could request to be buried in its complete monastic habit, even though they had never worn it during their lifetime. Women of diminished fortune, who could not afford fashionable dress, as well as elderly maidens, became accustomed to dressing in gowns of the color to which their order belonged. Such fashion was called "dressing gray," and such gray dress was sometimes also worn, even if very rarely, by wealthy ladies—if I remember correctly, by Lady Szembek, wife of the Crown chancellor, resident in Babice by Warsaw; by Korzeniowska, wife of the deputy Łuck pantler in Wołyń; and by several others as well. And they wore gray not for any worldly consideration but out of sheer devotion.

So-called devotiates, both men and women, were the same as tertiary members, except that devotiates both wore gray and actually lived close to their cloisters or entirely within the cloisters themselves. They devoted themselves exclusively to religious service, abandoning their household interests, and sometimes even renouncing their estates and deeding them to their children while still alive. One such devotiate was Sokolnicki, the Poznań standard-bearer, who for nearly twenty-three years walled himself up in tiny quarters next to a garden close by the Reformists in Chocz, in which quarters he lived out his pious life. Another one in Krzemieniec in the Wołyń district, a certain Węclawski, or maybe Wojsławski, was a tertiate member and even a founder of the Reformists there.

A third devotiate was Raczyński, the Poznań voivode and father of the Crown Court Marshal of the same name who, for reason of his devotion, yielded his substance to his son, beginning his devotion under August III and finishing it under Stanisław August in Łowicz with the Bernadines, on whose cloister's upkeep he lavished much of his fortune. However, growing bored in his devotion, he changed residence from one cloister to another and spent long days with his relatives or in-laws, but eventually ended his days in the cloister in Łowicz. There were not many such males among the devotiates, but a hundred times more females and, with the exception of a few genuinely pious souls, the latter mostly consisted of hypocrites, quarrelers, gossipers, calumniators, and drunks since, as is normal in all things, the bad mixes with the good.

The Mons Pietatis

While on the subject of societies, one may also mention here the *Mons Pietatis* (Mount of Piety), attached to the Society of St. Roch of the Missionary Brethren in Warsaw, which is managed by one of the missionaries of the brotherhood, along with the elder brothers of the above-mentioned St. Roch. As with other such brotherhoods, the service of St. Roch consisted in church singing, making votive offerings, and reciting certain prayers in honor of St. Roch.⁷³ The Mons Pietatis is a fund of money collected from various pious people with two worthwhile and praise-worthy aims: first as alms for those who are poor but are too embarrassed to beg in public and, secondly, for making interest-free loans to those in dire need. The person requesting the loan must leave a pledge worth twice the value of the sum requested. The appraisal for the pledge left in trust is approved by the missionary prefect of the Mons Pietatis, after first consulting with experts. Should a person fail to redeem the pledge after a year has passed, it enters the accounts of the Mons Pietatis. After selling the pledge, if more for it is received than the amount of the loan, the remainder is returned to the borrower or, rather, to the owner of the pledge. If it comes out to be less, then the Mount of Piety takes the loss. Lest the Mount decrease and turn to dust, its principle is invested, and only the interest produced from these investments circulates, for which reason it is unable to meet great needs but small ones only. The Mount of Piety was created around the year 1743.⁷⁴



73 Saint Roch or Rocco (ca. 1348–1376), an Italian saint and patron saint of dogs and the falsely accused.

74 Despite what Kitowicz writes, the Mons Pietatis (Mountain of Piety, and also translatable as “fund of compassion”) is said to have been introduced into Poland in the sixteenth century by the influential Jesuit priest Piotr Skarga, who had witnessed the fund in operation in Italy. It existed in most major Polish towns, not only under the Society of St. Roch in Warsaw, and had the aim of helping the needy while circumventing usurious pawnshops.



THE HOSPITAL OF THE BABY JESUS

The Hospital of the Baby Jesus exists as a major clinical children's hospital in Warsaw to this day, having been moved from its original site several times. It was founded in 1732 by the French-born priest Piotr Gabriel Baudoin (1689–1768), a member of the Missionary Brethren of St. Vincent De Paul. Originally established as a hospice to take in abandoned children, it later expanded its remit to include unwed mothers, the poor, the elderly and, especially after the failed Bar Confederacy of 1768–1772, war veterans. Its enormous twenty-two-building complex has existed on its present location in the Ochota district of Warsaw since 1901.

Kitowicz's well-written, matter-of-fact, eye-opening account of this charitable institution exhibits an increasing propensity of the part of the author to take an ironic view of matters falling within his purview. He does not fail to poke fun at the merchants who, at first thinking it a bargain to pay to get beggars off the street, later come to prefer putting up with the din they raise for free, rather than having to pay for the incessant clank of the hospital's alms-pot to get rid of them. Another example is his heavy-handed use of ironic euphemisms when describing the wealthy ladies who pay to give illegitimate birth clandestinely, leaving behind their "burdens" in the hospital. By means of such "charitable" endeavors, the hospital helped to make ends meet. By contrast, there seems to be no conscious irony in his approval of the king's granting of "legitimacy" to the graduates of the children's home (giving them, say, the right to ply a trade) on the basis of the fact that, for all one knew, some of them could have been conceived and born out of normal legal wedlock.

O.E.S.

A second fund of charitable piety,⁷⁷ called the Hospital of the Baby Jesus, was founded by a certain missionary by the name of Baudoin, a Frenchman by birth. This priest was moved by the plight of unwanted children who, having been conceived in debauchery, were cast out onto the street by their mothers in order to hide their shame. Occasionally they would drown them in the Vistula or just drop them anywhere in the muck. Sometimes even parents of a good marriage, oppressed by poverty, would do the same with their children. And so this priest, moved by the spirit of charity, took up these children's cause. He applied for support to the queen,⁷⁸ a highly pious lady, as well as to other lords and ladies, and he began to collect such children and to put them in the charge of women whom he hired to nurse them, paying them eight zlotys per child per month. This undertaking soon grew apace, and he bought a townhouse next to the Dominican Friars, in the vicinity of the royal warehouse, called Obożne (Settlement). He placed it under the charge of three Sisters of Mercy, commonly known as Gray-Sisters from the gowns they wore, and he commissioned them to raise such children to an older age once they had been taken from their wet-nurses, and he set up these sisters, along with the children, in comfortable circumstances. The fund of support grew rapidly, but so did the number of children, of whom practically every night several would be abandoned, so that eventually they could no longer be accommodated in the aforementioned town-house.

As a result, Father Baudoin, being supported by donations from everywhere, undertook a project incomparably greater than the first. He bought a large space behind the church of the Missionary Brethren and erected a spacious and up-to-date hospital there, in which he installed not only cast-off children but also sick people found lying about the streets. As a further act of mercy he arranged with the Warsaw authorities for a guaranteed weekly income from merchants and more prominent citizens in order to relieve them of the annoyance of having to encounter a multitude of beggars hanging about the streets and private residences. He engaged a dozen soldiers and had them round up beggars of both sexes, whether crippled or

77 The first charitable fund was the Mons Pietatis, described in the preceding chapter on religious piety.

78 Kitowicz has his years slightly off, if he means to imply that the hospital had its origin (which was in 1732) during the reign of August III, whose reign did not begin until 1734.

able-bodied, to be placed in the new hospital. Soon he had filled an enormous hall large enough to accommodate up to three hundred persons, ridding Warsaw of its drifters, since the younger and healthier among them fled the city before the soldiers were able to apprehend them. But he burdened himself with this poverty-stricken crowd to such an extent that, being deceived in the amount of alms he had been promised, and not being able to feed the multitude, he had to let them go. For, while the beggars ceased to clamor to people's faces, people came to view the clank of the hospital alms-pot and the clamor of the riff-raff as being equivalent nuisances, and so the fervor of those who had promised monthly alms for the upkeep of the beggars slowly died away, lasting for no longer than a year.

As for the abandoned children and the sick, that project continued unabated. August III allocated to the hospital the yearly profit from two thousand barrels of salt from the mines at Wieliczka.⁷⁹ Lords inspired by his example contributed large sums of money, and various private charities also continuously supported him. This same king granted to the hospital the *privilegium honestatis*, according to which those matriculating in it, as long as they had a document certifying that they had been raised in this hospital, became recognized as being of legitimate birth and therefore had the right to be accepted into any trade. After all, many among them could be found who were the offspring of a marital couch, whose parents, driven by poverty, had bought their child's way into it for a small payment or, being unable to make such a payment, either begged their child's way in or simply left it on the doorstep.

A small circle was placed outside the hospital on the street, next to which a rope was tied to a bell. One merely had to place the baby in the circle and ring the bell. At the sound of the bell a Sister of Mercy would come out and gather up the child. However, once the abandoned children grew to such number that it was no longer possible to find wet-nurses for them, a guard was placed at a slight distance from the circle who would accost the women abandoning their children. They would take such a person into custody until the following day, investigate what sort of person she was, and determine whether she had a husband or

79 The salt mine at Wieliczka, active since the Middle Ages, is today a major tourist draw and a UNESCO world heritage site.

means of livelihood. If she did, then she was released with a well-deserved warning and driven away from the hospital along with her baby. If she were an accidental mother without a husband, she would be taken in as a wet-nurse to her own child, and she would be given a second child to feed from the hospital. If, however, the guard were to find a red złoty alongside the abandoned child, the woman would be let go and the child would be accepted.

Since many such ill-born children were left out in the cold to die, the buy-in fee was set at a modest amount. There were also such parents as were respectable and wealthy but who could not abide the crying of a baby in their home, and so they handed over their children to be raised by the hospital in exchange for an agreed-upon sum or according to individual generosity. No more than eight such children were kept in a single room. Each one had its own wet-nurse, and sometimes also a nanny, placed under the oversight of a respectable woman who had her personal lodgings next to the room. Since the Sisters of Mercy do not consider it proper for them to tend to children at the breast or in diapers, only after children have left this first stage of childhood do they take them under their wing, teaching them their prayers and other religious duties. From the income brought in by such children the hospital can to an extent cut its expenses. It can also happen, although infrequently, that anonymous persons would come to the hospital, sometimes having traveled from great distances and in great secret (to the extent that such a thing is possible among a bunch of women), in order to give birth there to offspring who were also conceived in great secret. After relieving themselves of their burden, they return to whence they came, paying the hospital generously for making them pure again and for the fair treatment of the deposit left behind.

As the children grow up, the girls are taught various crafts, but the boys do not learn any, for male handicrafts are not available in the hospital, only women's sewing and embroidery on a hoop or loom. Both boys and girls, once they have grown to be more alert and responsible, go into service on the hospital's recommendation with lords and ladies, or some boys will be taken by tradesmen into apprenticeship. The duller of wit and clumsier among them are sent to villages belonging to the Missionary Brethren or to the Sisters of Mercy in other hospitals, or they can sometimes be placed in noble villages.

I will not describe here other, older hospitals, cloisters, or charitable foundations, whether located in Warsaw or across the rest of the country, for they are not the products of the charitable piety I have undertaken to describe under the reign of August III, but rather belong to former ages. My intent is to write about whatever came into existence during the reign of this king, or about something that, even if it is of older provenience, underwent change or completely disappeared during that later time.





THE MAIDEN CANONESSES

A canoness is a member of a religious community of women living the simple life. The canonesses in Kitowicz's sketch are so-called secular canonesses. In medieval Europe, many religious communities arose where unmarried daughters and widows of the nobility could withdraw to convents and devote themselves to pious contemplation without taking vows of poverty or chastity—in other words, without becoming true nuns. As Kitowicz explains, this institution arrived quite late in Poland where, in the given instance, it became transformed into what amounted to a marriage market for eligible daughters of the nobility, none of whom were particularly impoverished, and many of whom, as the present priest and past army captain does not fail to observe, were quite comely. In effect, these “maiden canonesses” were simply husband-hunting heiresses, a pursuit they felt they could follow more easily in the city than stuck out in the country. The prioress of the convent assumed the virtual role of matchmaker.

O.E.S.

A third charitable foundation,⁸⁰ hitherto unknown in Poland, appeared in Warsaw around the year 1749: the maiden canonesses. Their founder was Countess Zamoyska,⁸¹ the widow of the ordinate.⁸² She bought Marienville for them,⁸³ along with several villages on

80 Third after the *Mons Pietatis* and the Hospital of the Baby Jesus.

81 Józefa Antonina Zahorowska Zamoyska (d. 1747), wife of Tomasz Józef Zamoyski.

82 The *ordynat* (ordinate) was the heir in tail of a magnate family under the principle of *ordynacja* (ordination), according to which inheritance was passed down according to the principle of primogeniture along the male line, a means of maintaining the integrity of large landed estates in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The Zamoyski family, whose original ordinate, Jan, founded the town of Zamość, was one of the richest in Poland.

83 Marienville was a huge five-sided complex of buildings originally designed to be a trade center, along with apartments for merchants. It was located more or less where today's Opera House stands. The canonesses derived considerable income from their commercial concessions in Marienville.

the other side of the Vistula. In the center of this Marienville (which, like the Warsaw market square, is surrounded on three sides by townhouses and on the fourth by a wall) she erected a stone chapel suitable for church services. She established two choirs out of these canonesses, one higher, the other lower. The maidens of the upper choir had to be of high birth with an income of at least one hundred red zlotys per year. They enjoyed all comforts and ate at a separate table; in all there were twelve of them. Maidens of the lower choir had to be of noble, but of less significant birth, with an income of six hundred normal zlotys. They had their own separate table and had fewer amenities and more duties than the others; of these there were only six. All of them participated in the choir, which was conducted in Polish, and not with singing but in a loud voice. They did not rise for matins at night, for they held them at six o'clock in the morning. They were allowed to go into town, for which there were carriages, although the carriages served only the upper choir. Those in the lower choir were permitted to go on foot. All of them, when they went beyond the gate, did so only with the permission of the prioress, who indicated the time by which they were to return to the cloister. It was not considered proper for them to be seen at balls or entertainments. They were permitted to receive gentlemen inside the gate in a special hall designed for it. Those of advanced age could receive men in their quarters with the permission of the prioress, who judiciously took measure of the person doing the inviting and paying the visit. The prioress could receive a visiting man in her own rooms whenever she liked.

The prioress, selected from among those in the upper choir, holds her position for life. Immediately upon her election she takes a vow of chastity, in which there is no unpleasantness, for they elect as prioresses only those who long ago have passed their fiftieth year. The other canonesses do not take a vow of chastity for, of course, the founder had as her intention making it easier for ladies of high birth but of meager fortune to find husbands. But that aim is subverted, since it is crowded with ladies with substantial dowries and fine looks who prefer to search for a husband more easily out in public rather than stuck away at home. There are also others not so comely and of advanced age whose lost hope of finding a husband has driven them to devotion, leaving marital ambitions behind. Such women are likely candidates for future prioresses.

But there are none of impoverished means except for those in the lower choir. The cut of their gowns and headwear is the same as for normal ladies, but when they go to chorus they wear white cotton bonnets on their head and long light blue coats, also made of cotton, and their gowns may be of two colors only: black or white. They recruit chaplains and preachers from various cloisters and parishes. Economic management is in the hands of a pensioned nobleman, who has his residence behind a wall right next to the cloister along with the other household staff. He is called the commissioner. Those who wish to join the community of canonesses in the upper choir must prove their nobility as deriving from at least eight coats of arms;⁸⁴ to the lower choir four coats of arms are required. The difficulty in doing so is probably the greatest reason one finds no impoverished houses among the upper choir, for in Poland frequent wars, revolutions, and fires destroy public archives indiscriminately, so that it is difficult to prove eight-fold nobility even for those of lofty birth.⁸⁵

I emphasize that I have not departed from my subject matter by treating the Mons Pietatis, the Hospital of the Baby Jesus, and the fund for maiden canonesses all under the heading of Piety—for the love of one's neighbor, out of which flows pity for the poor, is the foundation of Christian piety. The fact that the foundation for maiden canonesses cannot be considered to encompass the poor came about by accident, which often confounds one's good intentions. For the founder's intention, strictly speaking, was to rescue the impoverished, and there is no more impoverished state than that of a highly-born maiden without a dowry.



84 From other sources it seems that only six levels of nobility were required, going back for three generations on both one's father's and one's mother's side.

85 From this subtle remark one may infer that it was possible, for the right price, for those of fewer than the requisite number of noble lineages to bribe their way into the upper choir.

II.

RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS
and

CEREMONIES



ON MANGER SCENES

In this humorous sketch on the rise and fall of the mobile crèche, Kitowicz describes how, through escalating competition among churches over which one had the best manger scene, in the spirit of the high Rococo displays that were designed to depict the humble birth of Christ expanded into vast mobile panoramas that eventually degenerated into what amounted to a Punch-and-Judy show having nothing to do with Christmas, the violence on stage metastasizing into a rout among the spectators.

The word jasełka, which today has only the meaning of a crèche or Christmas pageant, is the plural-only diminutive of Old Polish jasto (manger or trough), related to Old Slavic jasti (eat). The manger was typically elevated on crossed sticks so that the animals could more easily feed from it. Kitowicz's etymological gyrations at the beginning of this piece are as confusing as they are unnecessary. In the end, what difference does it make between a manger in a horse barn as opposed to one in a cow barn, in a text treating of the depiction of the humble Christmas scene in Bethlehem?

The crèche Kitowicz describes, in which a hubbub of activity depicting mostly ordinary people going about their business in the middle of the night with the Holy Family at the center of the scene, is typical of crèches in the Italian Baroque tradition. No doubt the original Bethlehem locals would have been surprised to see the Polish and Russian cavalry drawing up their artillery pieces next to the local inn. That strikes even Kitowicz as out of place.

O.E.S.

The Gospel tells us that Christ, born in a barn, was laid *in praesepio*. In Polish, *praesepe* means “crib.” A “manger,” on the other hand, is a partitioned part beneath the crib, where they put straw to serve as bedding for the horses. In barns where cows are kept they don’t have cribs, and the mangers are made of wood and they put straw and chopped hay in them. The person who first thought up the kind of manger I will describe below must have believed that a crib and a manger are two different words for the same thing, and the same as Latin *praesepe*, and for that reason he gave the name “manger” to his figurines and the other playthings that he used to depict the birth of Christ. When it was that they arrived in Poland I could not say, but I do know that for as long as I can remember they were used in all the churches. They played as important a role as the entombment scenes⁸⁶ around Easter, not so much for serious folk but mostly among mothers, wet nurses, nannies with children in tow, school-boys, young people of both sexes and, among the common folk, almost everybody.

The mangers I am talking about here were small and mobile, and they were set up in the corner of the church, or sometimes they occupied the entire altar both high and low and along the sides, except for one unoccupied stretch leaving enough room for conducting Holy Mass.

In the center there was a crèche on four posts with a thatched roof about a cubit square⁸⁷ in size. Under the crèche would be the crib, or sometimes a cradle, about a quarter of a cubit in length. In either one a likeness of the Lord Jesus, made of wax or papier maché, or sometimes of stuffed chamois or linen would be placed, wrapped in swaddling made of strips of cloth. Next to the crib on one side would be stationed an ox and an ass made of the same material as the effigy of the Lord Jesus, whether cast or modeled, kneeling down and keeping the Baby Jesus warm with their breath. On the other side Mary and Joseph would be standing bent over next to the cradle in an attitude of loving admiration.

86 See the chapter “Easter Processions and the Entombment Ceremony.”

87 The traditional Polish łokieć (cubit, ell) was 57.6 centimeters in length. It was divided into two stopy (feet). Other Old Polish measures were the cal (inch) at 2.48 centimeters, and the staje at 84 cubits (134 meters), although the staje was also used to refer to 1/8 Polish mile, or 893.3 meters. The Polish mila (mile) was 7146.4 meters, or around 4.44 English miles.

Above the crèche, both beneath and above the roof, angels would hover on wings, as if singing "*Gloria in excelsis Deo*." Then, keeping at some distance from one another, shepherds would be falling down on their knees before the new-born Babe, offering Him gifts: one a pot of butter, another a block of cheese, another a lamb, another a kid goat. Further on, behind the crèche on one side and the other, stood stable lads and villagers, some grazing their flocks of sheep and cattle, others sleeping, and yet others hastening to the crèche carrying sheep and goats on their shoulders. Amongst them all were figurines representing various classes of people engaged in typical activities: lords riding in carriages; lesser nobility and burghers walking on foot, peasants carrying firewood, grain, and hay to market, or driving oxen behind a plow, some selling breadstuffs, tavern-keepers with various beverages on offer, women churning butter or milking cows, Jews proffering goods for sale, and other such human activities.

When Epiphany⁸⁸ came, they would add to these manger scenes figurines representing saints bowing down before the new-born Christ, offering him gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and behind them processions of courtiers and assistants of various sort: Persians, Arabs, Moors, runners,⁸⁹ stable masters leading magnificently bridled horses, elephants, camels ... to be followed by various ranks of the military: both mounted and on foot, both dark-skinned and light, with tents pitched, and, finally, stretching the imagination, drawn-up regiments of Polish, Prussian, and Muscovite guards, field pieces, detachments of cavalry, hussars, knights, ulans, light cavalry, Cossacks, Hungarian horsemen, and other assorted such.

Such manger scenes were the object of great rivalry, especially among the clergy. The Capuchin monks outdid everyone else with the size and shapeliness of their crèches. But when these crèches were displayed year after year in the same form, somehow the motionless figurines no longer excited the waning interest of the people, so that, in order better to entice the people to their churches, the Reformists,⁹⁰ Bernardines, and Franciscans began to add mobility to their manger scenes by placing moving fig-

88 Epiphany, January 6, is a major Polish holiday, commonly known as *Święto Trzech Króli* (Three Kings Holiday).

89 *laufry* (runners): servants whose task it is to run in front of a carriage to make way for it.

90 The Reformists were a mendicant offshoot of Franciscan monks, active from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, later merging with the Bernardines.

ures among the standing ones which, by poking sticks through slats in the scaffolding made for the purpose, friars or other servants in the monastery would manipulate to play various humorous sketches. For example, here a Jew would be shaking a fur coat, showing it from both sides as if trying to sell it, when an approaching soldier would suddenly snatch it away. But the Jew didn't want to let go of it, so the soldier pummeled the Jew, who then abandoned the coat and ran off. Then the soldier went and tried to sell the coat taken from the Jew to a passing townsman, but the aggrieved Jew unexpectedly showed up with a group of soldiers along with the town constable, who would lead away under escort both the soldier selling the coat and the townsman trying to buy it.

When one such scene disappeared, another would take its place: drunken peasants brawling with clubs; the tavern-keeper's wife dancing with her lover when suddenly they both would be taken off by the Devil; Death first dancing with the Devil and then both of them starting to fight as they disappeared from sight; or soldiers being mustered, woodcutters cutting wood, and other such easily depicted human activities. Such silly antics appealed to simple folk and to the young so much that the churches would fill up with spectators standing on benches and clambering up the altars. But when the mob, crowding in from all sides and pushing against one another pressed against the barricade protecting the crèche, the church sextant would rush out from behind the scaffolding supporting the crèche with a whip and vigorously begin lashing out with it at whoever was nearby, creating an even more amusing spectacle for viewing than the action in the crèche, as those trying to escape the whip by falling back would tumble into each other, while others would nimbly jump down on top of them from the altars. Heads, bodies, arms, and legs would be jumbled together, and people would be knocked against each other so hard that they would emerge from the fray nursing painful bruises and black eyes.

It is true that such mobile demonstrations of the crèche took place at times other than regular church services, that is, between the mid-day meal and vespers, but such laughter, tumult, and commotion has no place in a church. For which reason, when such shows became increasingly more raucous and reached an intolerable level of indecency, Prince Teodor Czartoryski, Bishop of Poznań, forbade them, allowing only static

ones having a connection with the birth of our Lord. After this prohibition, the crèches, having become increasingly humdrum affairs, in some churches became less showy and in others were completely abandoned.

Rocking the Cradle

The revelations of Saints Teresa, Bridget, Mathilda, and other such saints tell us many things about the Lord Jesus of which there is no mention in either the Gospel or the Holy Book. In the same light we must interpret the Rocking of the Cradle—that it has its beginnings either in one of those revelations or, if not, then in the pious imagination of the Bernadine fathers, for it was only they that practiced this ceremony—not in the church, but in a sort of guest room next to the cloister gate. This small ceremony is not familiar to many: it was basically known only to the men and women devotees of Saint Bernard, who would gather for it right after mid-day meal. It looked as follows. An ordinary cradle for rocking children stood in the middle of the room, richly garlanded in flowers and bedecked with fine fabric. In it lay the effigy of the Lord Jesus, the size of an ordinary infant, sleeping and wrapped in rich swaddling. At the head of the cradle would be a two-cubit-high figure of the Most-Holy Virgin, dressed in a gown according to established fashion, and of Saint Joseph, dressed Jewish-style in a garment of light-colored material.

The entire cloister community would kneel around the cradle, forming a circle and singing a gentle song to lull the baby Jesus to sleep. A guardian angel on one side, and his second-in-command on the other, would rock the cradle while singing along with the rest. After the song was completed, the guardian would rise and say a prayer followed by a call and response delivered in a singing tone. Then he would sprinkle the people who had gathered with holy water, and the ceremony would come to an end. In all, it lasted no more than half an hour, and it took place only once a year, on Christmas Day.





6.

FLORAL SUNDAY

Palm Sunday falls on the Sunday before Easter, initiating Holy Week, the final week of Lent. The most solemn day is Good Friday, commemorating the crucifixion and death of Jesus. An older name for Niedziela Palmowa (Palm Sunday) is Kwietna Niedziela (Floral Sunday), as in the title to the present piece. On the Wednesday before Sunday, sprigs of willow would be cut for "palm leaves" and placed in a vase, until they blossomed in time for Palm Sunday. As we have seen in the text "On Manger Scenes," Kitorwicz can sometimes devote less attention to how a particular religious ceremony is conducted than to how it becomes subverted.

Even more so than "On Manger Scenes," the present text depicts solemn church ceremony devolving into riot and burlesque, almost as if designed to illustrate the Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin's (1895–1975) theory of the carnivalesque impulse, in which solemnity, piety, and normal standards of social behavior become undermined when an underlying human propensity for caricature, mockery, and profanity breaks out, with diverse and contradictory points of view being expressed over a range of registers from high to low, from euphemistic to bawdy—called by him "heteroglossia." In this text one sees in nearly perfect relief all four of the pinions on which Bakhtin's idea of the carnivalesque rests, which he illustrates with and to a large extent traces to the medieval village festival: (1) the free and unlikely mixing of people of different milieux; (2) the licensing of eccentric behavior along with freedom from its consequences; (3) the turning upside down of normal statuses and relationships; and (4) the profanation and caricature of solemn ceremony. Most prominent here among these aspects are (3) and (4), as the Palm Sunday celebration, with its elevated speeches delivered through the mouths of young children in church, duly evolves into a riotous burlesque performed by older boys and the neighborhood riff-raff.

O.E.S.

The Roman Catholic Church celebrates on this Sunday the entry of Christ into Jerusalem, when small children along his way strewed olive branches beneath his feet while singing “Hosanna to the Son of David.” To commemorate this day, at parish churches where parochial schools were located, as many as a dozen or so boys would be employed, decoratively dressed, with bouquets of palm leaves fastened to their sides,⁹¹ and with silk or muslin handkerchiefs tied in a cockade, that is, a knot of ribbons about their hands.

When the procession came to a certain pause, the children arranged themselves into a line and delivered various orations in verse, one after another, or sometimes every third or fourth one. The general topic of these orations was: the entry of Christ into Jerusalem and His later torment. Following such pious declamations, the children embarked upon other, more humorous ones they had also prepared: about fasting, Lenten herring,⁹² the Easter loaf, school-day boredom, and other such subjects.

Once the children had finished their perorations, older boys would push them aside and step out in front, or sometimes even sturdy farmers would volunteer, dressed up fantastically as shepherds, pilgrims, lamp-oil dealers, or soldiers, fashioning beards out of flax or some sort of leather with the fur side facing out. Those pretending to be soldiers wore peaked hats fashioned out of paper on their head, carried tarred wooden walking sticks in their hands, cartridge and rifle belts fashioned out of playing cards about their waist, and wooden sabers at their side. Those who had no mustaches or whiskers would fashion themselves some by placing a stripe made out of soot mixed with grease alongside their nose and chin, with two stripes on either side of the nose curling up in the shape of a mustache. Each of the orators would deliver a speech adapted to his character, composed in the most comical possible language. After delivering these speeches in church, the speechifiers—both the palm-leaved ones and the ones with walking sticks—would scatter in all directions: to homes, taverns, and even to noble palaces—wherever they were able to force themselves in—everywhere reprising the “sermons” given in church in an exaggerated voice, at every third word banging their stick against the

91 The weaving of elaborate beribboned corsages from palm leaves, willows, and other sprigs is still a living Easter folk tradition in many parts of Poland.

92 Herring is a favorite fasting food during Lent.

ground or brandishing their pilgrim's staff at their audience. Those pretending to be pilgrims, as proof of their travels, would take various curiosities out of their bag and show them off: horses' teeth, clumps of matted hair, out-sized hats, worn-out shoes, cows' tails, and other such junk pulled from the trash.

When such frivolities, unsuitable for a respectable home, not to mention a church, grew from a small number at the beginning into a larger and larger quantity, so that the crowd gathered at church at first merely smiled, but then later broke out into raucous laughter, offending the sanctity of the church, Father Śliwicki, missionary inspector and pastor of the Holy Cross church in Warsaw, was first to forbid these unseemly orators in his church. Following his example, they were also driven away from other churches, leaving only the child orators, as in the original ceremony. After having been driven out of the churches, the walking-stick orators hung around taverns and sales stalls for a few years, until finally, a change in popular taste having taken place, they disappeared entirely, no longer being able to achieve the same favorable effect on their pocketbooks as formerly.⁹³



93 From this, one concludes that the performers used the opportunity of their Palm Sunday masquerade and pranks to busk for food, drink, and small change.



7.

ASH WEDNESDAY. DARK MATINS.

These three short and not very morally uplifting sketches of Holy Week customs were spliced into the section on the customs of the nobility, as if an afterthought, for they have nothing in particular to do with the nobility. In them, we see an example of the classical Kitowicz manner, in which a somber ceremony (here, of Ash Wednesday), intended to cause one to ponder the evanescence of life, turns into a travesty of it, seemingly modeled after the Dyngus water fights (themselves a travesty), as young boys and girls, just for the sport of it, toss ashes over the clothes and into the eyes of complete strangers. As usual, the custom runs its course as societal mechanisms take over—here in the form of a small claims court.

O.E.S.

On this day the people were administered ashes, meaning that the priest sprinkled the heads of those kneeling either before the great altar or before some side altar with ashes made from palm leaves consecrated on Palm Sunday⁹⁴ (not, as simpletons are given to believe, from human bones), in this way reminding people that they too some day will turn to ash, and that, therefore, they should not become too attached to the vanities of the world, much less to its debaucheries but, instead, after the excesses and frivolities of carnival time are over, undertake penance through holy fasting. All those of the Catholic faith congregated in the church to receive it, and not even the foremost of lords ever neglected it. But since not everyone was able to receive this rite on Ash Wednesday, it was also administered a second time about the villages on the first Sunday of Lent. Such still was the piety of Poles during the first years of

94 In Poland, “palm leaves” can be quite elaborate and are woven not from palm leaves but from willow or other sprigs.

August III's reign that even the sick, unable for reason of infirmity to receive the ashes in church, asked for them to be brought and sprinkled on them in bed.

However, toward the end of the above-mentioned king's reign, as faith began to cool, especially among the young affected by the libertine spirit, the throng in church lessened and consisted mostly of common folk and, since no one asked for it any longer, the rite was no longer administered to people in their homes. On the other hand, not wanting the priests to strain themselves needlessly, wanton youth would administer it on their own, knocking one another over the head with bags full of ashes, or from out of hiding, sprinkling the heads of people of either sex out of ash-filled containers. Such licentiousness, however, was not practiced in the greater homes, but only among the petty gentry and, in towns, among ordinary folk.

A second ash ceremony, not ecclesiastical but lay, was long practiced in towns and villages. It consisted of some youngster, either from behind or in front of a passing woman—or some maiden from behind or in front of a passing man—tossing a clay pot full of dry ash onto the ground so near to the person that the ash from the broken pot, carried aloft on the air, would spatter and soil them, after which the young wanton (or wantoness) would cry out “Half-Lent, my lord (or lady, or miss),”⁹⁵ and then run off. However, since not everyone was able to bear such ceremony graciously, which was harmful both to clothing and the eyes—especially when there was no friendship or even acquaintanceship between the perpetrator and victim—quarrels and fights often broke out, and so the ceremony soon petered out, or rather was transferred from Catholics to the Jews, whom it was possible to affront freely, not only by tossing pots of ashes over their shoulders, but by thrashing them with sticks on almost any pretense, particularly in Warsaw, where Jews, not having the right to settle, had to be extremely circumspect and therefore suffered petty injury and insults patiently.

However, at last even the Jews were spared the ashes, once citations came into use, which became a source of easy profit for the Great Crown Marshal, while offering greater protection to our beloved Jews. No mat-

95 *Półpoście* is the word Kitowicz uses, signifying halfway through the Lenten season. In some places on this day, also called *Garnkottłuka* (pot-breaking day), the fasting of Lent was suspended for a day.

ter how slightly a Jew might be injured, as long as he could identify the perpetrator, a summons would immediately be sent out for the man to appear before the marshal's court, where the criminal would be summarily punished either in his pocketbook or on his skin, according to the person's fortune; after which accosting Jews in this or any other similar manner ground to a halt.

Dark Matins⁹⁶ and Holy Wednesday⁹⁷

On Holy Wednesday, morning prayers called Dark Matins were conducted in church, so named for the reason that after each psalm is chanted a candle is extinguished. The custom is meant to symbolize the confusion that arose in nature during Christ's suffering. Priests strike their psalters and breviaries several times against the benches, in so doing making a certain racket. In imitation of the priests, rowdy pranksters run into the church with sticks and knock them against the pews with all their might, making a thunderous racket about the church until old men and the church staff arrive with whips to drive them off. But the boys, being fleeter of foot than the old men, pummel them about the shoulders with their sticks and easily make their way out of the church ahead of the whips. Next they fashion an effigy out of old rags stuffed with straw, signifying Judas, and send one or two of their number up to the top of the church tower with him while others stand in readiness in front of the church. As soon as "Judas" is cast down from the tower one of them grabs him by the rope around his neck and drags him this way and that down the street while the others beat him with sticks, all the while calling after him as loudly as they can "Judas! Judas!" while the straw effigy is beaten to smithereens.⁹⁸ Should some Jew be unaware of this ceremony and accidentally stray across their path, casting aside their make-believe Judas, they set upon the real one with their sticks for as long as it takes him to find cover in someone's house. But this newly introduced custom too, since it did

96 In Polish, *Ciemna jutrznia* (dark matins; in Latin, *Tenebrae*). During the ceremony, candles are gradually extinguished while a series of readings and psalms are recited.

97 Holy Wednesday is the day on which Judas Iskariot formed the intention to betray Jesus.

98 The hanging, beating, and drowning of "Judas" was widely practiced on Holy Wednesday in some parts of the country into the twentieth century.

harm to the houses of God, to the servants of the Church, and to the poor Jews, through the intercession of school-teachers and public officials, after lasting for a few years, finally died out.

Now all the boys had to play with were rattles. Beginning on Holy Thursday and lasting through Holy Saturday, rattles were used during the time the Church did not use bells for ringing but only knockers for knocking. As soon as the knocker would sound from the church tower, the boys would immediately begin running about the streets with their rattles, raising a dreadful racket to passers-by. The rattle was a small wooden instrument, in which a thin strip of wood was attached to a notched rotary piece, also made of wood which, when it was turned around and around, made a frightfully loud noise. The more tensely the strip of wood was set into the rotary piece, the louder the racket it made. Some boys made the rattles themselves, while others bought them ready-made in the market square, where they were manufactured and sold in quantity by villagers.

The church knocker was in many parts similar to the instrument by means of which linen is carded, and it was placed on wheels so that it could be pushed around the street next to the church, announcing to parishioners the time of the next service.

Holy Friday

Pious Polish customs on Holy Friday have been described earlier. Here I will describe certain frivolous lay customs having to do with herring and sour soup.⁹⁹ On the evening of Holy Friday going into Saturday morning, the household staff on small estates would tie a herring to a thick, long string, to which it was further attached by a thin thread and hung over the road from a dry willow or other tree, thereby punishing the fish for having ruled over meat for six long weeks, starving human stomachs with its meager fare.

As to the sour soup, it was carried out of the kitchen as being no longer necessary, but it was actually a trap for some simpleton, whom they would persuade to take the soup pot, wrapped in a piece of mesh over his shoul-

⁹⁹ In Polish, *zúr* or *zúrek*, a traditional Polish soup, popular to this day, made from a sour rye-bread starter.

der and carry it either that way or on his head, as if to bury it. One sly fox would walk behind him with a spade as if ready to dig a pit for the soup to be buried in. As soon as they led the man out of the kitchen and into the yard, the person with the spade would strike the pot, and the soup would spill out all over the person carrying it, causing merriment among the on-lookers and witnesses to the fake burial of the sour Lenten soup.





8.

THE PASSION SERVICE
AND THE FLAGELLANTS

A routine description of the Holy Week Passion

Service is followed by a detailed description of the hooded flagellants participating in it. The flagellants were an ad hoc grouping of lay persons doing penance during Lent—the forty days before Easter—by lashing themselves on their bare back in public—a tradition still alive especially in some Hispanic countries and the Phillipines. The description here serves as informational background for the chapter to follow, a description of the Tombs Ceremony in which the flagellants play a prominent role.

O.E.S.

The Passion service is the common name for the service held during Holy Week. In cathedral and collegiate churches—in Warsaw, for example, in St. John's Church—after vespers or after a set of breviary prayers, according to the day, the priest takes the Host¹⁰⁰ from the ciborium, places it in a monstrance and, singing *O salutaris*,¹⁰¹ places the Host on the altar, while situating himself in a position suitable for celebrating the mass. Only then does the choir begin to sing in Latin, to the accompaniment of instruments, a chapter taken from the Gospel on the Passion of Christ set to music and divided into three parts, after which the sermon follows. After the sermon comes the procession and, after the procession, the priest and the people sing together first "O Holy God," and then "O save, O Lord, your people." After giving his benediction to the people, the priest places the Host in a vessel which he then takes into

¹⁰⁰ The bread consecrated in the Eucharist. It is held in a container called a ciborium.

¹⁰¹ *O salutaris* (O Saving Host) is a section of one of the Eucharistic hymns written by St. Thomas Aquinas for the Feast of Corpus Christi.

his hands and turns to the people, singing *Fiant Domine*.¹⁰² Repeating the benediction, he places the vessel with the Host in the ciborium and returns with the clergy to the sacristy, while the people sing a hymn in Polish on the Passion of the Lord; and that is the end of the service.

In other churches, whether of priestly or secular order, the same order of service is followed for the Passion as just described, with the exception that the Passion from the Gospel is not sung to the accompaniment of instruments, but only a chorus, with men and women taking turns singing hymns in Polish on the Passion of Christ. In some churches, such as the Dominican, the Passion service is divided into five parts, while in most others it is divided into three. Following each part of the Passion are added four lines from the hymn known from its beginning line, "*Stabat mater dolorosa*." Then follows a hymn expressing the lament of the pious soul over the suffering Christ. After singing through either the three or the five parts of the Gospel on the Passion of Christ, they sing five times "You who have suffered for us, O Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon us." After this follows the sermon, followed by the procession, after which comes the song "He is hanging on the cross," and then "Oh Holy God," and so on to the end, as in the cathedral churches.

The flagellants, or *kapnicy*, are so called from the *kapy*, or hooded caps they wear on their heads. These are people of various background who whip themselves in public in repentance of their sins, whether out of contrition or as commanded by a priest at confession. The caps for the most part are made of simple, coarse, grey cloth. However, since human ambition creeps in everywhere—even into places where only a humble spirit and meek heart ought to be displayed, so even here—not all caps are grey and of coarse cloth. Some are of fine and shiny material of various hue—red, green, light blue, dark blue—and the hoods that go with them can be of fine Chinese or French silk. The cut of the caps is not unlike the noble Venetian hats worn at Carnival time.

They put on their caps in a room near the church in the following way. First they turn their shirts around with the opening in back, and their gowns similarly, over which they place their hooded cap, which also has a

¹⁰² *Fiant Domine*. From Psalm 130, a song of penitence: "Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication."

slit in back, so that the shoulders remain bare. After the cap they put on a simple belt of either rope or leather, for anonymity.¹⁰³ The hood is placed over the cap in such a way as to conceal the entire head and face, with holes cut in the material of the hood for looking out. The part of the hood that covers the face is long, and hangs halfway down to the waist, so that one can lift it off one's face and over one's head in the dressing room before the Passion begins, when one has no need to prevent oneself from being recognized—for example, in order to take sustenance or to have something to drink, in which activity some flagellants, especially those of humbler station, over-do it. The other part of the hood hangs down in back and is cut slantingly from shoulder to waist, in such a way as to cover the shoulders when it is not necessary to bare them in order to whip oneself.

When it is time to process, the flagellants proceed in the following manner. They are led by one of them carrying a cross, almost always barefoot. Next to him walk two small boy flagellants carrying candles in candlesticks. Behind them follows a procession of flagellants walking in pairs. At the very end come two flagellants supporting themselves with staffs. These are the marshals, and their office is to instruct the flagellants when to kneel in the church. When there were not many flagellants, they would kneel by twos next to the pews. If there were more, they would kneel in threes. As they left the dressing area, they would break into a hymn about the Passion of the Lord, but as they entered the church they would leave off singing, so as not to interrupt the Passion service in the church, which would usually already have begun before the entrance of the flagellants. When the flagellants have arranged themselves, the marshal first gives a sign by knocking his staff against the church floor, and everyone lies down in the shape of a cross and stays in that position until certain words are heard in the hymn being sung in the church, after which, with a similar sign from the marshal, they rise to their knees, pull back the part of the hood covering their backs and, tossing it over one shoulder, they lash themselves on their bare back with either leather or braided rope whips. Some flagellants heat the ends of the whips in fire to stiffen them, and some twist needles into the braided rope or leather whips the better to lash their bodies, which they sometimes

103 Traditional Polish sash belts, worn over the gown, or *kontusz*, could be highly ornamental and, therefore, identifiable.

apply with such practiced skill and force that they hit raw flesh and tear up scarlet strips, splattering their gown, caps, and the church floor with blood. The whipping lasts about a quarter of an hour, and comes to an end with the marshal's sign at the last verse of the hymn. If any flagellant does not obey, and whips himself longer than the rest, the marshal approaches him and takes the end of the hood from around his shoulder and lays it back over his back, lest he try to stand out from the rest by overdoing it.

After the lashing was finished, the flagellants would kneel for a moment and then lie down in the cross position for a while, always taking their cue for each activity from the banging of the marshal's staff. They lash themselves three times before the sermon and procession and two times after it, the last time being the longest. In churches where the Passion was composed of five parts they would whip themselves five times before the procession and two times afterward. After the whipping is over, the flagellants rise to their feet and stand in pairs (or in threes, if that was how they had kneeled), and then they wait to approach and kiss the cross. The cross was placed at the head of the column of flagellants on a pillow lying on a carpet. No one would move from his place to kiss the cross until the marshal walking behind him had touched his leg with his staff, this being done so as to avoid crowding and confusion. Having kissed the cross, each one returns to his place, and the marshals would be the last to kiss the cross. When the kissing of the cross is completed, the flagellants depart from the church in the same order they have come and re-enter the dressing room, where they leave their hooded caps. The caps either belonged to the church or to the order of priests associated with the church. The more modest ones were distributed for free, but a person wanting to get a fancier one had to slip something into the palm of the person handing them out, for the demand for them was greater. Some people rented them for all of Lent, and others, not wanting another's blood and stench left on their cap, had their own made.

It might happen, albeit rarely, that some timid, pious maidens would don caps in secret, placing them over a man's gown, and join the flagellants, lashing themselves in public right along with them. However, since maidens are by nature mild and merciful, they did not stoop to mortify the flesh excessively, but merely passed the whip over their body rather lightly, more caressingly than whipping it, presenting thereby, with their delicate body and thin shirt, a vision of love rather than of penance.



EASTER PROCESSIONS
AND THE ENTOMBMENT CEREMONY

Kitowicz's depiction of Easter customs here is both informative and interspersed with entertaining vignettes and side anecdotes. His description of the processions of flagellants begins solemnly, then devolves into practically slapstick comedy, as the competing parties of flagellants turn on each other, before becoming serious again. Exhibiting compositional skill, Kitowicz creates narrative suspense by leaving until the end of his description the main thing the chapter deals with, i.e., what the entombment scene actually looks like, by which time it seems anticlimactic. The sympathetic treatment of King August III and his wife is noteworthy and striking, inasmuch as that ruler's reign was largely one of rising political paralysis and disorder, leading to political catastrophe. The king was a largely absentee ruler in Poland, residing almost exclusively in Dresden and ruling Poland by proxy through advisers. Besides fathering many children, the king was a great patron of the arts, music, and opera (he built a fancy opera house in Warsaw), to which this excerpt alludes.

In contemporary Poland, the entombment scene is set up in connection with the Good Friday service, and depicts Christ lying in his tomb, with more or less elaborate accompanying decoration and figures, according to the resources of the church. In a smaller church a crucifix may be removed from the wall and laid in a supine position on or under a table or bench, often covered with a shroud. A watch of soldiers, real or in effigy, may be placed around the scene, as described here.

On Easter Day, flagellants,¹⁰⁴ in each church separately, observed the entombment of Christ, walking in a procession by pairs and carrying a cross in front of them. In each church where they visited the tomb, they would lash themselves one time. The priest accompanying the procession would give a brief exhortation, after which, maintaining the same order in which they had come, they would leave one church and head for another, singing along the way a song about the Passion of the Lord. Upon entering a church, they would leave off singing. Not from all churches, but from some, a procession of flagellants, besides carrying before them a cross with the image of Christ, would have a second immense cross the thickness of a stout beam made of joined pieces of lumber for easier carrying, which one flagellant would bear amidst the rest, walking not erectly, but bent halfway over, similar to the way in which artists depict Christ as he carried the cross to Calvary. For this role a stout lad was selected. On his head, or rather on his cap covered by his hood, he wore a crown of thorns and was girded with a long thick chain around his shoulders and under his arm. The end of the cross would be carried by another flagellant walking after him, depicting Cyrenius.¹⁰⁵ Two other flagellants, carrying drawn swords on their shoulders, would represent the soldiers leading Christ to Calvary, one of them holding the end of the chain in his hand. The flagellant depicting Christ from time to time would stumble beneath the weight of the cross, at which one of the soldiers would tug on the chain and strike the cross with it, making a loud racket. The other, striking the cross with the flat side of his sword and beating the bearer of the cross lightly across the back, would call out to him in a loud voice: "Get along with you, Jesus!" At this, the cross-bearer, who actually would have grown weary from walking bent-over, after a moment's rest would get up and set out on his further journey, that is, the procession.

If there was a large crowd in the church that the procession entered, or if space inside or the entryway was so tight that the flagellant with the cross could not comfortably enter with it, he would remain outside in front of the church. During this time he could sit down, take a rest, have a smoke, and sometimes quaff a mug of beer with a generous fellow drinker.

104 See the chapter "The Passion Service and the Flagellants."

105 By "Cyrenius," Kitowicz means Simon the Cyrene, a Jew forced by Roman soldiers to help Jesus carry his cross to the crucifixion—in Catholicism, the fifth of the Stations of the Cross.

It could also happen, albeit rarely, that the thirsty bearer of the cross, unable to find a sympathetic soul willing to fortify him, would leave the cross and chain next to the church and himself dash off to the nearest tavern to satisfy his thirst. But if he were unable to satisfy it before the procession came back out of the church, those playing the soldiers would rush to get him and this time they would beat their swords against his back for real and drive him back to the cross—that is, if he should happen to be hired, rather than simply participating out of devotion.

Should two flagellant processions converge at the same time in front of the same church, and if they were sufficiently stubborn that one did not want to yield right of way to the other, it could come to fisticuffs or sticks, and rocks would fly. However, it would rarely lead to excessive bloodshed, since a small number of hot-headed flagellants could easily be broken up and subdued by a much larger group of people of various sorts following the procession, or by the people observing the entombment ceremony nearby.

The entombment ceremony would be celebrated by clergy of every rank: bishops, prelates, canons, diocesan priests, friars, right along with secular people: senators, nobility of various ranks, and ladies and gentlemen gathered either as a group, as a family, or individually, as they preferred. Some would come on foot, while others would ride in carriages. School-boys from the Piarist, Jesuit, and Augustinian schools would participate separately, accompanied by and under the supervision of their teachers.

At the entrance of every church young women and ladies of various rank would sit with silver trays beseeching passers-by for alms for the benefit of the church before which they were seated. They would not request alms from anyone with their voices, but with the clank of their tray by banging it against their bench, and if anyone of rank or someone who was finely clothed should pass by, the clank they made would be all the louder. The prettier women usually took in more alms than those past their prime, due to the natural deference accorded beauty even in matters of pious generosity. Next to some tomb scenes, in addition to the alms-women just described, clergy and brethren from religious orders would be standing, holding a reliquary for people to kiss, set out on a table decorated with a covering, carpet, and candles. On a dais beneath the table, a tray would

be placed onto which those approaching to kiss the reliquary would toss some coin according to their desires: a shilling, groschen, thruppence, or sixpence (which had the value of twelve copper groschen and two shillings). In front of each tomb scene, spread out on a carpet, would lie a crucifix with a tray placed at the end, onto which those kissing the crucifix would toss coins similar to those just mentioned or, if there was no place for a tray beneath the crucifix, they would toss them onto the carpet. In addition to the local alms-seekers from each church, men and women from various brotherhoods, sisterhoods, and hospitals would take up positions along the church portico and at various other places in the church leading up to the tomb scene.

The observance of the entombment began at one o'clock in the afternoon and lasted until midnight—but only in the larger cities, where there is a multitude of churches and people. Lords and ladies visited the tomb during the day, while at night the household staff would come, as it was not fitting for them to appear together with their masters and mistresses. Whenever an order of monks was resident in a church, at nine o'clock at night the Passion scene would unfold in front of the tomb, with the lashing of the flagellants and a sermon without a procession, since the procession had already taken place publicly at other tomb scenes. On Saturday, before the beginning of the Resurrection, hymns would be sung next to the tomb about the Lord's Passion or about the Most Holy Lady of Sorrows. In some churches an orchestra or lutenist would play.

August III, although he was extremely pious—and even more so was his wife the queen—nevertheless did not attend the entombment ceremony. The queen, when she stayed in Poland together with her husband the king and their sons and daughters,¹⁰⁶ would attend the morning Good Friday service in the parish collegiate church of Saint John. There, after the Lord Christ had been laid in the tomb, the royal couple would pray for a while and then return in a group to the palace. After dinner the queen and her daughters would ride again to the parish church and, exhibiting exemplary piety, she would kneel praying for an hour before the tomb, and then

¹⁰⁶ King August III and his wife Maria Josepha Habsburg of Austria had fourteen children. It would have been a rare occasion for August and the entire family to be in Warsaw, as they were normally resident in Dresden in Saxony. August spent only three of the thirty years of his reign in Poland, some of the time out of necessity because of the Seven Years' War.

either return to the palace or, sometimes, visit the tombs at the Reformists, the Benedictine Sisters, the Carmelites, and the Sisters of the Visitation.

When the queen died in Saxony, and the king, driven from Saxony during the Seven Years War with Prussia, lived in Warsaw, he still did not visit the tombs, as was said above, but at five o'clock in the afternoon he would attend the Lamentations, which were performed with exquisite musical talent by his court singers, both male and female, accompanied by various instruments. A guard, stationed at the church door in order to keep out the crowd, allowed only the more distinguished visitors inside, but only until the church grew crowded. That service, by virtue of the king's person and good intentions, must have been pleasing to God, as the king desired to honor the mystery of the Tomb of Christ with his magnificent orchestra. One time, kneeling at the pulpit, he prayed without moving, his eyes fastened on the Holy Sacrament, during an entire cantata. Such others as were admitted to the church, including senators, officers of the court, members of the bar, courtiers, officers, musicians from various other courts—among them many dissidents—turned their backs on the tomb and gazed instead upon the choir, delighting in the melody of the instruments and the grace of the vocalists, while some directed suggestive gestures at the attractive women vocalists, forgetting that they were in a church, not at the opera.

Next to the tomb in the collegiate church, the king's guard kept watch from the moment Christ was placed in the tomb until the Resurrection, while at the Benedictine Sisters' Church of the Holy Trinity it was members of the Crown Artillery. Wherever soldiers stood watch, whether in front of palaces or in barracks, they would hold their rifles pointed downward with the stocks up the whole time. No drum or orchestra throughout this time could be heard, in accordance with the solemnity of the occasion which, in the Catholic Church, signifies the remembrance of the death of Christ.

Entombment scenes were fashioned in various ways, adapted to a story taken from scripture out of either the Old or New Testament. For example, they might represent the patriarch Abraham preparing to kill his son Isaac as an offering to God; or the patriarch Joseph lowered by his brothers into a well; or the prophet Daniel left in the pit among the lions;

or Jonas being swallowed in the gaping jaws of the whale; and other such things. From the New Testament it might be Calvary with Christ hanging on the cross surrounded by the soldiers who had crucified him and a throng of Jewish on-lookers; or the stone into which the tomb was carved and into which the body of Christ was laid, with sleepy soldiers standing watch at the tomb; and other such mysteries of the torture and resurrection of Christ. In some churches the scenes were mobile: lions would flash glass eyes blazing with many colors, illuminated by light cast from behind, while wagging tongues lolled out of their gaping mouths; or waves would roll upon the sea; or Longinus, seated on a horse, would approach the side of Christ with his spear,¹⁰⁷ while the two Marys, standing beneath the cross, would lift handkerchiefs to their eyes and then faintly cast their eyes downward. In the person, or strictly speaking in the effigy, of the person who comprised the center and motive of the display¹⁰⁸ a round hole would be hollowed, either in the breast or in the side, as large as the host, through which hole was visible the host itself, displayed in a monstrance behind the figure, placed on a pedestal. The entombment scenes would be decorated with sculptures, paintings, and arcades receding into the distance, and they would be illuminated with candles and concealed lamps casting off a bright light. In front they would be draped with carpets and tapestries, each church trying to outdo the others in the decoration of their scenes. The most beautiful tomb scenes were to be found with the Jesuits and, in Warsaw, with the Missionary Brethren. In Warsaw the Piarists did not compose scenes based on history but simply displayed the Holy Sacrament on the great altar along with a multitude of white wax candles arranged symmetrically on both the altar and its pediments.



107 According the Gospel of John (19:31–37), a soldier, by tradition named Longinus, pierced the side of Jesus to make certain he was dead.

108 That is, Jesus.



10.

THE RESURRECTION CEREMONY AND CORPUS CHRISTI PROCESSION

Two short chapters are combined here into one. In the first action-packed vignette, we are shown two sides to the pomp of the Easter ceremony celebrating the Resurrection of Christ, as pickpockets operating on its fringes feast on the crowd of celebrants as sharks on a shoal of fish. The antique firearm referred to by Kitowicz organki (little organs), capable of firing off a rapid-fire sequence of not very well-aimed shots, reminds one of the similarly named and crudely aimed Soviet rocket-launchers of World War II, whose appearance and howling sound earned them the nickname "Stalin's organs." The disorganized accompanying blaze of gunfire by the celebrants offends the former military man's sense of discipline, and he is unable to resist putting in a jibe aimed at the lack of discipline among Polish soldiers.

Kitowicz is curiously concerned to list the different times at night at which the Resurrection procession began at different kinds of churches, but this detail directs one's attention to the fact that the Polish word for Easter is Wielkanoc (Great Night), and the celebration used to begin on Saturday night, not at daybreak on Sunday morning, as is usual nowadays.

The Corpus Christi (Christ's Body) Festival celebrates the meaning of the Holy Eucharist. It is a moveable festival usually falling in May or June. In today's Poland it is a national holiday and celebrated by the devout much as Kitowicz describes it here, with the Host, or consecrated bread, being carried aloft in a monstrance in a long procession of priests and lay people that stops at certain stations along the way for prayer. Especially in the countryside, people may dress in regional costume and strew the roadway with flowers

O.E.S.

The Resurrection ceremony, a procession on Easter Day when the Blessed Sacrament is taken out of the tomb, was the same as it is today: three times around the inside of the church and three times outside the church, or around the church and the cemetery, or the galleries of the church, whatever the physical arrangement allowed. In larger towns the procession began around midnight from Saturday to Sunday, although in the case of cathedrals it began at nine o'clock on Saturday evening. In villages and smaller towns whose parishes also served villages, it began at daybreak on Sunday, as soon as the sun rose.

Almost universally in villages and smaller towns in the midst of the solemn celebration people would fire off mortars, artillery pieces, and so-called "little organs," which were firearms consisting of many barrels fixed to the same stock, capable of firing off one round after another, ignited by a fuse. Soldiers who might be stationed nearby would fire off individual shots from rifles or, where there were no soldiers, in towns members of trade guilds would join in the fusillade, and in villages, farmhands would. And since such people, being untrained in military tactics, would often shoot not in unison but piecemeal (sometimes the same was also true of the soldiers), the saying became established, when hunters were spotted firing densely into a thicket, that "They're blasting away like at Resurrection."

In Warsaw, when the king was in residence, he always attended the Resurrection service either with the queen or, when he was in the country by himself, alone. The service would then begin at eight o'clock in the evening. The king's guard, arranged into two rows, would march behind, sheltering the back of the king with their bodies, and walking along with the procession next to the Blessed Sacrament, over which senators or high Crown officials held aloft a canopy. As soon as the procession in church got underway, members of the Crown Artillery, who would be standing behind the parish church on Garbage Hill,¹⁰⁹ would fire off a hundred-gun salute. Since the king was tall in stature, corpulent of body and, toward the end of his reign, advanced in age, in order to save him from the

¹⁰⁹ *Góra Gnojowa* (Garbage Hill) is a promontory in Warsaw along the Vistula, still going by that name, used as the town's garbage dump up through the reign of Stanisław August. The conjoined image of the one-hundred-gun salute and the garbage-named station from which it is delivered could be intentional.

excessive strain of proceeding around the church three times, the procession would circle only once.

In other Warsaw churches the Resurrection celebration began an hour before midnight in the church of the Missionary Brethren and marched in succession from one church to another until daybreak. Many common folk set for themselves the task of running from church to church, from one Resurrection celebration to another. The most assiduous among such devotees were pickpockets, who mixed in with the crowd and relieved people of their money, watches, snuff boxes, and scarves. And even should a person sense that someone was rustling around in his pocket, he might be so carried along and pressed in by the mob that he either couldn't pull away from the person in time or shout early or loudly enough to succeed in frightening the thief away from grabbing his purse.

Corpus Christi Processions

These processions always took place publicly: in towns around the town square, and in villages around the church. In towns with several churches the clergy, whether those in orders or lay clergy, along with city officials and members of guilds, were obliged to assist the procession that departed from the principal church. Each religious order marched in the procession in pairs behind their cross, carried by one of the brethren—except for the Jesuits, who, by virtue of papal bulls and the decrees of various bishops wanting to force them onto an equal footing with other orders, were exempted from carrying a cross. The guilds all marched in the procession carrying their guild banners and candles. The Warsaw merchants' association carried muskets from which, as soon as the clergy entered the church with the Host, they stopped in front of the church and fired off three rounds. The association was divided into two different "battalions," one of them consisting of those dressed German-style, and the other of those wearing Polish clothing. The two battalions also differed as to the color of their dress. The commanders of the battalions were arrayed as richly as can be imagined: the German commanders wore scarves, carried spontoons,¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ *spontoon*: in this context, a ceremonial officer's staff, looking like a cross between a spear and a battle ax.

and wore military hats topped with white ostrich plumes, while the Polish-style commanders carried hetmans' staffs and wore sable busbys. The separate battalions fired each on its own, one after the other, three times each, and after each fusillade the ensign in charge of the banner would execute by way of a salutation various tricks with it, such that sometimes, in the course of quickly tossing it about in different directions and tracing circles with it he would knock it into the head of some unsuspecting spectator or someone shoved forward by the crowd. The Germans outdid the Poles in flourishing the banner, but in riflery the Poles always excelled over the Germans, who never managed to fire all at the same time, even though they engaged lower-ranking officers of the Crown Guard to help them.

The shooting was the only difference between Corpus Christi processions under August III and those during the reign of Stanisław August, under whose court decree, in consideration of the timidity of women, the custom was abandoned.¹¹¹ Among merchants, only those who were in the town administration or who wanted to be in the procession out of devotion took part, carrying candles but without banners, occupying the place between the religious orders and the lay priests.

In Warsaw, for the procession (which is always led by a bishop or by the prince primate, and in which the king almost always takes part) they make a board platform around the market square, beginning from the great doors of the parish church, for the more comfortable walking of the king, the celebrant, and the decorated¹¹² lords, who lift high a baldachin as they walk behind the king. Along both sides of the platform are drawn up two lines of members of the Crown Foot Guard, so as to keep away the mob and sometimes even more distinguished gentlemen. Alongside the baldachin protecting the Host, and next to the senators and distinguished ladies, march members of the Crown Guard. In August III's day this function was performed by footmen, although toward the end, after the Prussian king had his entire army taken away from him at Pirna in Saxony,¹¹³ it was done by the Crown Horse Guard.

¹¹¹ According to what follows, the shooting was curtailed at least in Warsaw, but not necessarily in other towns and villages.

¹¹² That is, wearing orders of merit; see the chapter "On Orders."

¹¹³ August III's small Saxon army capitulated to an invading Prussian army under Frederick II near the town of Pirna on October 16, 1756, part of the Seven Years' War.

The person carrying the Host is not supported under the arms by laymen, as is the practice in some other places, but prelates stand by ready to lend him assistance should the need arise. People looking at the procession out of their windows, most of whom are ladies, must shut their windows as the procession draws near, lest these enticing creatures cause distraction by drawing attention away from the ceremony and upon themselves; for it is a grave indecency for the heads of these lovelies to tower over the Host.

Everything that took place under August III was exactly the same as today under Stanisław August except for the firing of rifles, which still accompanies the procession in other towns and villages just the same as at Resurrection.





EASTER MONDAY AND ST. JOHN'S EVE

Dyngus, or Śmigus-Dyngus, the practice of men sprinkling women with water on the Monday after Easter, is pretty clearly the relic of a pre-Christian fertility rite. By the time Kitowicz describes it, by the second or third day after Easter, women get to sprinkle the men in return. The custom is still practiced throughout East-Central Europe, but nowhere more enthusiastically than in Poland, from where it has spread to Polish settlements abroad—in the United States most notably to Buffalo, New York, which bills itself as the “Dyngus capital of the world” and holds a parade and festivities said to attract tens of thousands. Although Kitowicz notes how much things have changed since the reign of August III, sometimes they do stay the same. It is easy to recognize in his description of what is also known as lany poniedziałek (wet Monday), the holiday of water terrorism as practiced in its present-day version in Poland.

Although nowadays the custom can feature water balloons thrown out of windows at passers-by, or drive-by “shootings” of pedestrians out of car windows with water cannons, if anything the custom as practiced in Kitowicz’s day seems to have been even more raucous. Ethnographers and anthropologists like to think that the custom originated in the countryside and only migrated to the cities over time. Be that as it may, it certainly seems to have been well entrenched in city life already in Kitowicz’s day. In his lame discussion of the origins of the custom, one sees how it is possible to pin almost anything on the Jews, no matter how far-fetched. Equally silly is the idea that it arose from mass baptisms upon Poland’s conversion to Christianity. Kitowicz glosses similarly clumsily over the tradition of the bonfires lighted on St. John’s Eve, a much more colorful, licentious, and enduring custom than Kitowicz gives it credit for being, especially in the countryside. It seems originally to have been a Celtic custom celebrated throughout the Roman empire. Despite the Church’s

attempting to infuse the practice with Christian religious content, in some parts it was practiced as a kind of Devil's Night or Black Sabbath, during which girls and boys, after jumping across the flames, would wander off with one another into the darkness of night, supposedly searching for medicinal herbs (such as St. John's wort, or the elusive fern flower) to ward off evil.

O.E.S.

Dyngus was a frivolous pastime that was current throughout the entire country, both among the common folk and the more distinguished. On Easter Monday men would douse women with water, while on Tuesday and any of the following days women would douse the men, usurping the right to do so all the way to Pentecost,¹¹⁴ but in practice for no longer than a few days.

There were various ways of dousing. Among more distinguished couples, desirous of performing the ceremony in a manner least unpleasant for the other, a man would sprinkle rose water or some other scented water on a woman's arms, or at most on her shoulders with some small atomizer or tiny bottle. However, those who, needing no further justification, preferred frivolity over discretion, would splash women straight in the face, or from top to bottom with a bucket, jug, or a large spray pump. It would happen that an overly enthusiastic mob—gentlemen, lords, ladies, young women—without even waiting for their proper day—would drench one another and people of whatever social station, whomever they could find. Liveried servants and lackeys would bring buckets of water, and the distinguished company, drawing water from them, would chase after each other until everyone was thoroughly drenched from head to foot, as if they had just emerged from a flood. Tables, stools, settees, chairs, beds: everything would get soaked, and the floors were like ponds, streaming with water. For this reason, when dyngus time arrived, people, especially a young couple, would clear away all of their more valuable furniture and dress in their meanest garments, made of such material that water would be unlikely to spoil.

¹¹⁴ Pentecost, or *Zielone Swiatki* (Green Holidays), is observed fifty days after Easter.

It was considered the greatest sport to catch a lady in bed, who would be set swimming in water amidst her pillows and feather bedding as among waves upon the ocean. Held down by stalwart men, she would be unable to avoid the flood. Keeping this in mind, in order to avoid being caught, ladies on that day would rise as early as possible and for good measure barricade their bedroom doors. As for men, they were not subject to such inundation by women, as they had more power to resist. Even a weaker man would put up a mighty struggle for fear of shame for allowing a woman to seize and gain the upper hand over him in his nightshirt.

It sometimes happened that a person, wet as a mouse on a day when it was still cold, would come down with a fever, but no one paid any mind as long as the custom was upheld. Dynguses like this in towns took place mainly among close acquaintances, but farm lads in the villages would chase after young women (who, on that day, would hide as best they could) and once they had caught one would carry her to a pond or river, take her by her arms and legs, and toss her in. Or, setting her down in the trough by the well, they would pour water over her for as long as they pleased.

On the streets of towns, young people of either sex would lie in wait for passers-by with pumps and pots full of water. Sometimes a girl wishing to soak some boy, or a boy some girl, would douse a total stranger, even a priest, an elderly gentleman, or an old lady. Women, knowing that men could give back a hundred times better than they got, never initiated dyngus on their own, and were glad to get by without it, but, once caught by the men, they would respond in kind with whatever strength they had at their disposal.

Two different reasons have been given for the origins of dyngus. Some say that it came from Jerusalem, where the Jews, in order to disperse the crowds and put an end to gossip about the resurrection of Christ, threw water out of their windows on people gathering to talk. Others say that dyngus has its beginnings in the introduction of the holy faith to Poland, in the initial stages of which it was impossible to baptize such a large number of people individually, so they drove them *en masse* into the water and dunked them in it. One can believe whatever one likes. I am not here to discourse on the genesis of customs, but to describe what they were like under the reign of August III, merely touching at times on origins in so far as I may have heard about them.

St. John's Eve

After a cold bath we proceed to a warming fire. On St. John's Eve after vespers, and sometimes in the dead of night, in villages and towns people lighted huge bonfires on the street, called *sobótki*.¹¹⁵ Young people of both sexes, but mostly young men, would jump across them. This custom, far worse than dyngus, was already dying out by the middle of August III's reign, until at last it came completely to an end, first in Warsaw under the stern watch of the Great Crown Marshal and then, on Warsaw's example (from where customs both good and bad are spread throughout the entire country), it was eradicated everywhere for reason of the harm it did. Buildings would catch on fire from the bonfires, and people would get hurt from jumping across them when, blinded by the thick smoke, they would sometimes jump straight into each other, fall into the fire, and scorch their eyes, faces, arms and bare feet—particularly the women, who were not protected from beneath. Boys, a ragtag element of whom is never far away from any frolicsome activity, would surreptitiously toss hollow keys or cartridge shells stuffed with gunpowder into the fire which, when they suddenly went off with a roar, tossing the fire up into the air, would cause the jumper to take fright and become entangled in the embers and fall into the fire, and after him a second and a third following close behind. Before people pulled them out they would have baked themselves into a fine couple of roasts.

The custom of Sobótki without any doubt had its origins in Poland among the pagans, who set bonfires and jumped across them in honor of their gods. When Poles converted to the Catholic faith they used fire to burn the idols, both the ones in their temples as well as their household ones and, whereas once they jumped across fires to honor them, now they did it out of contempt for them.



¹¹⁵ The name, the diminutive of the word *sobota* (Saturday), may have been a borrowing from the Roman *Sabatina*, a celebration of the founding of Rome.

III.

CHILD-REARING
and

EARLY EDUCATION



CHILD-REARING

Not much needs to be said by way of commentary about this routine description of child-rearing in eighteenth-century Poland, except possibly for one thing. Kitowicz is clearly much more intrigued with girls' clothing than with that of boys, and he either has an astounding memory or was working from elaborate notes on the young female costume made many years previously.

O.E.S.

The way in which people come into the world is and always will be, from the beginning of the world to its end, the same, known to all, and in common with the animals. But the care and treatment of children once they are born, and their further upbringing, is not always the same.

Under August III's reign, mothers giving birth were assisted by elderly matrons. Immediately upon separating the child from its birth material, she placed it in a warm bath scented with various herbs, and then the baby, once it was washed, was wrapped in diapers. This bath was repeated for several days running, sometimes even twice a day, but later the bathing was repeated less often. At first, the bathing was the responsibility of the midwife; later it belonged to the mother, the wet-nurse, or to another care-giver. Right after birth the child was placed in a cradle, and it would be rocked for as long as was necessary for it to go to sleep. During the day, the baby would be both sung to and rocked for it to go to sleep the more quickly. A child thus trained never fell asleep without crying itself to exhaustion if there were no one to rock it, as could happen with children of modest circumstances or of poor parents, when the mother nursing the baby at the breast was herself occupied and needed to put the baby down somewhere, sometimes in a furrow in the field at harvest time, sheltering it from the sun with a sheaf of grain.

In Poland they used cradles standing on the ground on rockers; in Ruthenia and Lithuania they hung them from ropes. That kind of cradle is better, for they don't make noise like the ones on rockers do, and once set in motion they continue to sway on their own, so that the person tending it can take a nap herself before the cradle comes to rest. On the other hand, a child will hurt itself more seriously in case it accidentally falls out of a swinging cradle. No medicines are given to babies while still at the breast except for syrup, adapted to the malady; for constipation a peg of soap is inserted in the place where the feces emerge. After washing out a child's armpits and between the legs, they sprinkle the baby with powdered alabaster.

When children are being trained to take solid food, a paste is first made from bread, sugar, butter, and beer; later a pap is made from flour or small-grained buckwheat groats (*kasha*). Children of higher status and in wealthier households are given chicken broth, *kasha* with milk, and other light fare. While they are being taught to eat, before letting them take food they are first taught to make the sign of the cross, by tracing it with the child's own little hand on his forehead, breast, and shoulders. And when children have begun to mouth words, they are immediately taught a prayer. They are not allowed to take a bite of food until they have at least crossed themselves and, for the older ones, said at least some part of a prayer from memory.

Poorer mothers and simple peasant women would poke whatever they themselves were eating into their child's mouth: peas, cabbage, noodles, etc., after first chewing it thoroughly and blowing on it to cool it down. Some mothers, whatever they themselves were drinking, for example vodka, would give some to their child to taste, in the superstition that if it tries vodka as a child, when it grows up it will find it disgusting. But that is a grave misunderstanding: such children grow up to become the most serious tipplers, both men and women.

Once a child began to stand on its own two feet, it was taught to walk by guiding it with straps. This was done with a contraption of leather thongs sewn to a piece of cloth, looking like a woman's laced camisole, with two long ribbons in back with which the care-giver lifted the child as it placed its legs; and when it had already become used to taking steps, it would be placed in a round cart on four wheels as tall as the child's arm-

pits with its legs left still standing on the ground, enabling it to move about wherever it wished to go.

In order to protect the head from knocking against things, children were given little caps made of velvet on top, usually with a red silk lining underneath, padded inside with cotton and supported with two strips around the head so that it not fall over the child's eyes, and strapped under the chin with a ribbon or tape, so that it not fall off the head when tied. The child was never without such equipment other than at night when it slept. They also protected the child's upper body from the cold and harsh weather with little jackets lined with cotton, or they would cover the entire infant in a dress and furs, including little slippers and stockings. Boys would be given tiny shoes. Peasant children and the children of the poor, knowing nothing of such dress, endured the harshness of the air bare-headed and in paltry open jackets, or often in nothing but a flimsy shirt.

Such were the customs of feeding and clothing children up to the age of four or five. I will describe the following adjustments only for the children of the rich and noble, leaving aside peasant children and those of the poor, for they had no particular costume or food adapted to their age. They ate the same food as their parents and, as for dress, it consisted of a coarse shirt and some kind of rag for pants, and in many places one could observe children as old as ten, both boys and girls, growing up naked as parsnips, huddling next to the stove or sliding over the ice in the middle of the winter.

Children of the nobility and of wealthy parents in the city were dressed differently. The girls were given laced bodices strengthened with whalebone for a better silhouette, in other words, a slimmer waistline, although lacing such a bodice too tightly could sometimes produce an elongated silhouette and be bad for the health. A skirt was worn over the bodice reaching from waist to ground, in summer of cotton flannel and in winter of wool. Over these two garments a light coat would be worn made of thin silken material, laced in back and reaching from shoulder to foot, cut in front to match the bosom, which would sometimes be covered with a silk scarf, or sometimes not, according to fashion. The coat would be drawn at the waist, pleated below, shorter in the front, and longer in the back. Over it an apron of muslin or other thin fabric would be tied, with the apron-top reaching to the chest. The arms of the undercoat were of el-

bow length. Leather or silk gloves would be worn on the hands, or sometimes knitted or crocheted ones, not quite reaching to the elbows. Their hair would be woven into braids, and the head would either be left bare or topped with a flowered bonnet. In winter, a black velvet hood lined with light cotton, satin, or silk would be worn, according to the weather. On their feet they wore leather slippers decorated with flowers, although that fashion died out in the middle of August's reign, being replaced by slippers made of fabric.

Boys were dressed in a silk *żupan* and a wool *kontusz*¹¹⁶ with split sleeves, usually wearing their arms outside the sleeves and with the sleeves crossed in the back and tucked into the belt. The belt would be of light-colored silk material, with white crocheted stockings on the legs, and black calf-skin slippers on the feet. The hair would be worn curly, with either a hat on the head or, in winter, a fur cap as well as a light fur-lined coat for dressing against the cold, along with long wide gloves. The fur coats were of the same cut for girls as for boys.

And this was the way children were dressed until the age of twelve. After twelve years of age they were dressed in the same costume as adults, according to the prevailing fashion.



¹¹⁶ For *żupan* and *kontusz*, see the Glossary of Commonly Used Terms and the chapter "On Costume or Dress."



THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN
PAST THE AGE OF SEVEN

The political reformer Hugo Kołłątaj (1750–1812), while writing about Polish schools in the middle of the eighteenth century, says in just so many words that they were totally worthless. The present text, rather than being about education, is concerned as much as anything with corporal punishment and bullying in the parochial schools, a subject that Kitowicz, who probably attended the Piarist school in Warsaw, seems to remember best. Latin had to be beaten into boys from an early age, since it was necessary for legal, governmental, or church work—the last being a line of employ to which Kitowicz elsewhere honestly confesses he was not at first drawn. Until late in the eighteenth century, Latin was even the language of instruction at Polish universities. The task of learning Latin was made the more challenging by the use of textbooks left over from the Middle Ages that were totally incomprehensible to school-age children. Girls got to stay at home and learn more refined subjects like French, dancing, music, and needlework from special tutors.

The brief passage on student games highlights palant, a primitive kind of baseball, and palcaty, mock saber duels with sticks—both of which, as Kitowicz notes, were sports with military relevance. The description of student sports is surely incomplete. Missing, for example, is the game of kiczki (tipcap) played with a bat and a block with a pointed end. The bat was used to knock the point into the ground and the block up into the air, where it is struck a second time with the bat as far as possible into the field of play.

Since some children of more capable minds were taught to read at home from the age of five, they were generally not given to the schools until they had begun or finished their seventh year.

For those living in cities, the first school was a parochial one,¹¹⁷ attached to the parish or cathedral next to where one lived. In the villages it was difficult to find a parish where such a school existed, for which reason a nobleman living in the country, before sending his children to school, first had to teach them to read, hiring for the purpose some teacher, in case there was no one among the household staff capable of rendering such service.

Only boys were taught in the parochial schools. Girls would be put in charge of some sedate matron who did this for a living; she would teach them to read Polish, how to crochet stockings, and to do various sorts of needlework. The daughters of more prosperous gentry would be taught German and French, which had already come into fashion. The daughters of great lords would be taught all that by a person on staff and, in addition, they would receive instruction in writing and dancing from special masters.

Boys in a parochial school would be taught their ABCs and the first beginnings of Latin from the grammars of Alvarus or Donatus.¹¹⁸ Catechism, or the study of religion, was foremost among all other subjects. School punishments for those who did not want to study, or who committed some kind of mischief, were these: being deprived of the afternoon meal, kneeling, or whipping. The instruments of punishment were: the “patty-cake,” a round, thick, layered object made of several pieces of leather the size of a hand, fastened to the end of a wooden handle, with which one would be beaten on the hand for making a mistake in reading or for failing to memorize some passage that one was supposed to recite. And for completely failing to do one’s assignment, or for making major mischief or other infractions of school rules, the instruments of punishment were either a birch rod or the “disciplinary”—a kind of whip, usu-

¹¹⁷ By “parochial” school, Kitowicz means a “parish” school.

¹¹⁸ Aelius Donatus (active in the fourth century A.D.) was the most famous Latin grammarian of late antiquity. His works were still being published in mid-eighteenth-century Poland. The prosody of Emmanuel Alvarus (1526–1582), published as late as 1761, was for more advanced learners. Both works were by repute totally incomprehensible to school-children.

ally made of leather. Among stricter teachers it would be braided out of thick threaded strands having seven or nine branchings. Whether with a rod or the disciplinary, one would be beaten on one's bare bottom—at least three times and as many as fifteen, according to the degree of offense, the boy's body's resistance to pain, and the severity or leniency of the teacher.

For larger lads of more than seven years, a whip was used. This was a hard strap thickly braided of other straps fixed to a wooden handle about a cubit in length, constructed like a peasant's threshing flail. The whip was not used on the bare body, for it would have done permanent damage, but through the clothing, or rather the trousers, but even so, it could inflict a wallop of pain. Nevertheless, there were children of such firmness of body that they could withstand punishment by the whip even on their bare body without breaking the skin, which would merely become notched with bluish welts. Those who were thus firm of body were also usually those who were dullest of mind: dunces and dolts, able to withstand any kind of unpleasantness.

There was one other kind of punishment in the parochial schools, although not as often applied. When some boy let out an unpleasant odor to those around him, of his own free will the culprit would lie down on a bench in the middle of the room, and each of his fellow students would take a boot off his foot and slap him with the boot-top. But this was a punishment of shame, not of pain, equal to that for a mild infraction.

In the course of school-time study there were two days in each week set aside for recreation, which took one's mind off the rigors of school work, and these days were Tuesday and Thursday—not always the whole day, but most often the half day, beginning at noon. However, in May those days were almost always wholly given over to student recreation. Nevertheless, whenever a holiday followed a Tuesday or a Thursday, recreation was cancelled so as not to lose too much time from study, so that neither recreation nor holidays completely freed students from study. A certain minimum number of instructional hours were designated that had to be completed, together with assignments that had to be written over the holidays or, if not, and it wasn't brought to school on the first or second day afterward, merry recreation was followed by tearful lamentation under the whip.

Students went out for recreation in a mob, together with their teachers and tutors,¹¹⁹ but not necessarily everybody: whoever wanted could keep to himself in a separate small group. Games played at recreation time were typically batball and singlestick, games which students also played outside school, before lessons began.

The ball was made of wads of wool or oakum,¹²⁰ tightly wrapped with string, over which a leather covering would be sewn, or it would be covered with a tight netting of multicolored thread. Sometimes people would place a piece of fish or calf gristle in the center of the ball, for better spring. The ball would be used in one of two ways. One was for hitting someone's hand with it as he held it against a wall, or for throwing it against the ground and catching it in the air. The other, when recreation was held in an open field, consisted of batting it as far away as one could in the air and chasing after it in groups. The first sport, with the ball, taught accuracy in hitting a target with a hand-thrown missile. Supposedly this custom was introduced in the schools at the time when slingshots, rocks, and other projectiles were still used in warfare. The second sport gave suppleness of body, quickness of foot, and accuracy of hand when the ball was caught in the air after having first been thrown breast high from one boy to another holding a bat cocked at his side. When struck, the ball would fly upward so far that at times the eye could not even follow it. Everyone on the side to which the ball was struck strained their eyes, with hands ready to catch the ball when they saw it coming back down. As soon as they spotted it, they would rush there as quickly as they could, each one trying to outstrip the others, hoping to catch the ball in the air. For if it fell to the ground without being caught by anyone, the game was lost. There were no bets or stakes on the game, but only the pride of winning and the shame of defeat. This game was called *palant*, and the teachers and tutors played right alongside the children just for the excitement of it.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ On tutors, see the chapter "Public Schools."

¹²⁰ Oakum consists of tarred strands of unraveled rope, usually used as caulking for boats or cabin logs.

¹²¹ The historian Norman Davies has suggested that American baseball may have developed from *palant* as played by Polish immigrants in the Jamestown settlement, although a British origin for American baseball seems more likely.

A second game during recreation time consisted of large sticks called *palcaty* (singlesticks), with which the students held one-on-one duels with each other.¹²² This sport was of great use especially for the noble class, since it trained young people later to be skilled in the use of the saber, a weapon with which our forebears were especially proficient in battle. It was really quite something to observe two boys take up the *palcaty* and fight until exhausted, each wielding his *palcat* skillfully, defending himself from all directions and reaching his adversary with a hit, except that neither could strike the other on the face, head, or side. And some were good enough to serve as teachers, passing on their skill to others, so that occasionally one could find among the younger teachers, whether Piarist or Jesuit, excellent wielders of the stick. These *palcaty* were used among the students not only during recreation but frequently even in the school itself before lectures began. If some student were timid and didn't dare to take up a *palcat*, he had to endure much bullying and mockery from the whole school, and sometimes suffer bruises and being pummeled across the back.



¹²² *Palcaty* are thin sticks one meter (or slightly shorter) in length. They were first used in mock duels among cavalry officers in camp in order to keep their swordplay sharp. From there the sport spread to the schools, where it was still practiced until World War II. It is recently undergoing a certain revival in the form of contemporary Polish single-stick clubs.



PUBLIC SCHOOLS

This matter-of-fact informative sketch of Polish eighteenth-century post-elementary education (which, apparently, consisted in learning Latin and not much else), quickly finds Kitowicz out of his intellectual depth when he begins to explain the nature of subjects beyond his own modest level of middle-school education, which concluded with the study of "rhetoric." He attempts to explain Copernican theory on the hilarious example of a roast revolving around a fire. Still, one has no special right to feel superior to him. His brief excursus into the realm of philosophy regarding the site of physical sensation, and whether it resides in the body or in the soul (on which subject he rightly opines, given his presuppositions, that it is a chicken-and-egg proposition), has no less right to exist than many of the other fanciful doctrines being espoused at that time or, for that matter, nowadays.

Apart from the use of humiliation and the birch rod as prods toward diligence (presently out of favor in educational circles), one marvels at the democratic underpinnings of the Jesuit and Piarist school systems (the one more conservative, the other minimally less so) of Kitowicz's day, in which peasant, servant, and noble scion sat in the same schoolroom subject to the same discipline, and where a servant was allowed to outshine, and often did, his master. In addition, there were various ways in which poorer students (including those from the impoverished nobility) could earn money and thus pay for their education. On the whole (especially given that the study of Latin is said to be making a comeback), it seems like not a bad system to emulate.

As if confirming the inexorable law of unintended consequences—that many good things come to an end under the banner of making them better—so did the idyllically democratic school system Kitowicz describes, as the prestige-seeking Piarists, and after them the Jesuits, not wanting to be left behind, began establishing colleges exclusively for the sons of the nobility, not only taking most of the better students, tutors, and teachers out

of the public schools (leaving the worse teachers behind with the worse students), but depriving the poorer students of a means of getting an education.

Notable is the author's rambling approach to his subject matter, according to which he feels he has to mention everything that comes associatively to mind, including things he forgot to mention at the beginning. To a large extent this is the compositional method he uses throughout: he has paper, pen, and ink in front of him, and he simply writes, taking minimal opportunity for correction, and giving no care to minor inconsistencies or backtrackings.

O.E.S.

After having acquired the first rudiments of Latin in a parish school, students were then sent to the public schools, whether Jesuit or Piarist which, in all the towns in which they were located, were so jam-packed that there could be as many as a thousand students in each one. All the burghers, nobility, and great lords sent their children to the schools; education and punishment were the same for everyone, without regard for whether one might be the scion of a noble family or a stripling farm lad—a young lord, burgher, or peasant. However, the sons of the nobility, while on an equal footing with those of lowlier rank, did receive the preference of being seated in the foremost benches, although a bad student among them would go straight to the *scamnum asinorum* (donkey's bench). This was a bench near the stove, named for those who did not want to study, and if such humiliation did not assist in rousing a slothful student from his lethargy by itself, he would have a straw crown placed on his head, and as a last resort he would be paraded around in such a crown to all of the other classes,¹²³ calling after him "*Asinus asinorum in saecula saeculorum*" (ass of asses for now and forever more). It rarely got as far as that last unbearable disgrace, however, for once someone arrived at the straw crown stage, he would sweat and toil with might and main with book in hand, in order

¹²³ By "school," here and elsewhere in this text, Kitowicz often means "grade," and where it seems appropriate it is so translated.

to avoid being paraded before the other grades, and soon he would be dethroned from the donkey's bench and abdicate his straw crown to the peg on which it normally hung when, as was often the case, there was no head for it to be placed on, to be gazed upon by the lazy as a warning, and by the diligent as a joke devised for their amusement.

Study was divided according to grade. The first grade was called the *infima* (lowest), and it was divided in two: into the *infima minor*¹²⁴ (lower one) and the *infima maior* (upper one), but in both of these grades study looked almost the same: the agreement of adjectives with nouns, the uses of the cases, and the tenses and moods of the verb, a difference being that at the lower level the constructions were easier, and in the upper one more difficult; another difference was that the smaller children entering school were sent to the lower *infima* and the bigger ones to the upper one. In the Piarist schools, this school grade was called the *parva* (small one), but the subject matter was the same as in the two Jesuit ones. After the *parva* came grammar school, in which, from beginning to end, study by grade was the same among both Jesuits and Piarists, namely: grammar, syntax, poetics, rhetoric, philosophy, and theology. Few students enrolled in the last grade, unless while already of school age they felt a calling to the cloth.¹²⁵ For the most part, those who did not have such an inclination concluded their studies with philosophy, or often only with rhetoric.

Grammar taught one how to compose simple short sentences using basic expressions. Rhetoric gave the means of decorating simple speech with various figures of speech and roundabout ways of expressing oneself. Poetics taught one how to parse Latin words metrically into syllables, and which ones were to be pronounced short and which ones were to be drawn out.¹²⁶ It also taught one how to write both Latin and Polish verse, aiding in the development of the mind. Once one was versed in syntax, and was

124 Many or most Latin expressions in this text have been omitted via translation into English, but some are left to give a flavor of the text and as witness to the fact that Kitowicz, without even thinking about it, expects for Latin to retain its status and for his reader of the future to be conversant with it; i.e., it is not just his way of showing off. The author uses his Latin words grammatically, putting them in the accusative or genitive case, for example, when they would be in that case in Polish.

125 A calling which the future priest evidently did not have at the time.

126 Latin metrics would have had to be learned, since in Polish almost all vowels are intrinsically short.

sufficiently developed of mind in poetics, one was promoted to rhetoric, the art of speaking long and well on any subject, sharpening thereby one's wit, whether for speech or writing, all of which is of great use for any man, no matter what means of livelihood he pursues, and that is why the education of school-age youth directed all of its resources toward that one foremost aim.¹²⁷ Philosophy taught an entirely different kind of learning from those taught in the grades just described, but I must beg forgiveness of my Reader for not giving adequate information about it, for I did not attend philosophy, but finished school after only three years, having completed rhetoric.¹²⁸ In so far as I have heard about that subject, it deals with the study of nature, with causes and effects, with occurrences and conclusions, and with inalienable truths; and I forgot to say at the beginning that, first of all, that subject teaches certain terms by means of which one may express oneself concisely and precisely in the other philosophical disciplines. In the regular schools, both Jesuit and Piarist, philosophical study was divided into dialectics, physics, logic, and metaphysics. Several times a week some students also studied mathematics.

In the public or general academies, for example in Kraków, Zamość, or Wilno, in addition to the subjects just mentioned, they taught all kinds of mathematics, astrology, geography, geometry, cosmography¹²⁹ and, in addition, jurisprudence and medicine; these academies were known as universities. As for philosophy in general, no patriarchs of this discipline were taught other than these two: Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas, and in all disputations the warring factions would never justify themselves other than by saying "*iuxta mentem Aristotelis*" (according to the thinking of Aristotle) or "*iuxta mentem divi Thomae*." (according to the thinking of the divine Thomas). In the academies anyone who wanted to take the doctoral degree in philosophy had to swear that he would not follow or teach otherwise than "*iuxta mentem divi Thomae*." Those who held to the opinions of Aristotle were called Peripatetics, while those who followed St. Thomas were called Thomists.

Somehow the Piarists were the first, around 1749 or thereabouts, to have the audacity to print in a certain political pamphlet anecdotes re-

127 That "foremost aim," apparently, being the mastery of Latin in all of its dimensions.

128 One of the few autobiographical bits of information in all of Kitowicz's writing.

129 Cosmography deals with describing the cosmos and the universe.

lating to Copernicus trying to prove that the earth turns while the sun stands still. Regarding which doctrine, as soon as it came to the attention of the Jesuits, they did not hesitate to employ their minds (and they had only the best of them) against their dogged adversaries the Piarists, and also to rouse the other religious orders against them regarding such a hypothesis, or rather opinion, contradicting the teachings of old. The upshot was a general uprising across the schools against the Piarists. They published books undercutting such an opinion, challenged the Piarists to debates, and tried to do their utmost to discredit them on the subject. For their part, the Piarists kept uncovering some new saying taken from contemporary philosophical luminaries: Copernicus, Cartesius, Newton, or Leibniz, demonstrating that all these schools had accepted so-called neoterism, in other words, the study of the new,¹³⁰ according to which the earth revolves around the sun, not the sun around the earth, just as a roast revolves around the fire, and not the other way around. Or that colors are not inherent to things, but are just the way we see them: white, black, green, red, yellow, and so on, as caused by the temperament of the eyes and the light, an excellent proof of which, for example, is the apple, which is green during the day but by candlelight appears grey; that pain, itching, and other sensations are not located in the body, but in the soul, based on the argument that a body without a soul cannot feel anything.

N[ota] B[ene]: It seems to me that, just as the body does not feel sensation without the soul, neither does the soul feel it without the body; similarly, an organ does not play without an organist, and an organist cannot play without an organ; and if sensation is not located in the body but the soul, then in either case no voice comes out of it.

It was under August III's reign, right in the midst of it, that the new philosophy had its beginnings, albeit with great trepidation, but by the end of his reign it had already spread and established itself everywhere.

And so this has been an overview of the public schools and their subjects of study during the reign of August III. These studies were not free of obligation: every student attending them had either to study according to his ability or, by not studying, to endure the school's punishment. If he did not learn anything at all, he had to resign from the school. It was

130 Strictly speaking, neoterism refers to an innovation in language.

viewed as something on the order of a commandment, backed by the professors, that the students enrolled in the schools obligatorily profit from the experience according to their mental capacity, particularly in the lower grades up through rhetoric, so that they not end up eating their parents' bread for free.

Besides these subjects, to an extent and at certain hours, German, French, and arithmetic would be taught, but not with the same rigor as Latin. One was free to study these additional subjects or not, or to study them seriously or only in passing, to attend lectures or not; no one was ever punished or reprimanded. Latin alone, or rather the constructions that are common to all languages, received the full intensity of instruction, to the extent that even a professor, if he taught badly, either received a reprimand or was removed from his post and assigned to another position of lesser standing. The teachers working in the lower classes were addressed as "master," and they were generally clerics of a lower rank. In the upper schools, beginning with those in rhetoric, instructors were addressed as "father," for the reason that those giving lessons in those classes were already ordained priests.

It was not only professors, i.e., school-teachers, who assisted with lessons; there were others, called tutors, who lived together with the students in their quarters and explained the lessons to them, going over the lessons with them and giving them supplemental instruction until they finally understood them. They accompanied the students from their lodgings to the school and from the school back again to their lodgings and went along with them for recess and on field trips. In short, they always had them in sight. And once they had taken the students to their lessons, they headed off to lessons of their own. The tutors were engaged by and paid for by the students' fathers. A third category of student was servants, often themselves the sons of impoverished noble parents, serving the sons of other nobles and magnates. While serving their masters, they went to classes along with them and often enough exceeded their masters in learning. Their duties to the young lord (or lords) to whom a lad was in service were to make the bed, sweep out the room, keep the clothing and shoes clean, assist at table, carry books to and from the school for the young lords, and to go on whatever other errands were required. In this way, very many sons of the nobility became educated and made shining careers.

However, soon the Piarists founded a special college for the sons of the nobility and, following their example, after first condemning it, the Jesuits established a second one,¹³¹ and the public schools became sharply reduced in quality. The damage done to public education was two-fold. In the first place, the better instructors were assigned to the new colleges, while the worse were given to the ordinary ones. In the second place, the tutors and serving boys lost the ability to study in the colleges. Tutors were no longer needed, their duties being assigned to resident professors, who constantly lived, ate, and stayed with the college residents, who were distributed along the floors in chambers like in a Turkish palace. In place of the former serving boys, lackeys were engaged, up to four per student, with two students living in each accommodation, consisting of a larger room with nooks on either side holding two beds and two small tables, curtained off instead of having doors. Every third room contained the locked quarters for a Piarist, and at the end of the floor were the quarters of the senior professor.

The Theatines¹³² had their own college, but it was very small and of an entirely different disposition. They made use of various kinds of servants for waiting on the needs of the noble sons; sometimes the servants were noble themselves, and sometimes they were German lackeys. Whoever wishes to learn more about the reasons for complaint against the noble colleges should try to find the book entitled *Complaint of the Poorer Nobility against the Piarist Priests*,¹³³ published right after the opening of the Piarist college. During my days in the public schools in Warsaw the academy was attended by two Pac brothers, the Wodzińskis, Oskiereks, and the Pocięjs, each of whom had several servants, not just one, along with tutors, each family on its own. Other noble sons with less support could be found in all the schools.

131 This was the famous Collegium Nobilium, an elite boarding school for the sons of wealthy nobility, founded in 1740 by the Jesuit priest and political reformer Stanisław Konarski (1700–1773), who became highly influential under the reign of August III's successor, Stanisław August Poniatowski. The laudable aim of the school was to prepare Poland's future political and administrative leaders according to the latest in scientific and political thought.

132 The small, largely aristocratic Theatine order was founded in 1524 by Saint Cajetan (1480–1547) and Giovanni Pietro Carafa (later Pope Paul IV) of Chieti (Latin: Theate), in east central Italy near the Adriatic coast.

133 Actual title: *Complaint of the Poor Nobility on the Colleges Opened in Poland*, by S. Czapski, 1759, i.e., nineteen years after the founding of the Collegium Nobilium.

A fourth¹³⁴ category of student were the so-called *calefactors* (stove-tenders). These were already grown lads, twenty-years old or more, and their duty consisted in chopping wood, lighting the stoves, and, if any students merited whipping, then they, and not the professor, would mete it out from a place in back of the stove and behind a curtain. In this way the professor's decorum was preserved in front of the other students: for it sometime happened that a lad, unable to endure the birch rod, would suddenly get diarrhea and let it all come out, as if he had taken rhubarb.¹³⁵ There was one calefactor for every one or two stoves, and he and the wood he chopped was paid for out of a common pot by the wealthier students, and if the pot were insufficient it would be supplemented by the college's Jesuits or Piarists, and he would be given board out of leftovers from the refectory.¹³⁶ After chopping wood and lighting a fire in the stove, the calefactor would attend lessons along with the other students. However, these calefactors, being rather dull-witted, were rarely promoted to the higher grades. Having learned to read and write, and picking up a smidgen of Latin, they would quit school and take up some other vocation.

Regarding the tutors, I should also add that there were two kinds. One was paid by the year and served either one noble son or the sons of a single family, whether noble or burgher. The others had under their supervision a gathered assortment of lads of modest means, from whom they took payment quarterly, at the rate of several zlotys per quarter per child, with sometimes dinners taken earlier and out of turn. The groups of students were usually assigned to tutors by the priest prefect of the school, giving the better groups to the better tutors and the worse ones to the worse tutors. These tutors, being poor, but of modest deportment and with no stripe against them, were free to assist as one of the best men or as orators at weddings, and for giving the bride her wreath, a ceremony that was still alive in my day, but only amongst the common folk, already having died out among noble families and the more prosperous burghers. For serving at a wedding such a best man could take in a silver thaler and a scarf from the bride, which for a poor lad was not a bad stroke of luck.

¹³⁴ The four categories of students Kitowicz mentions are: the nobility, the non-nobility (burghers and peasants), tutors, and the "calefactors."

¹³⁵ The root of the rhubarb plant was used as a laxative.

¹³⁶ *refectory*: the common dining room in an educational or religious institution.

In the larger towns, such impoverished tutors would also hire themselves out as scribes for various guilds, especially to butchers, bakers, and cobblers, these being the most numerous, giving them more than enough to do at guild get-togethers. The process of accepting termed apprentices, and their promotion to journeymen or masters, was a frequent occurrence, and it always required a scribe able to record these guild events smartly and in a beautiful hand. For the unlearned consider something smart even if it is unintelligible but written in a beautiful hand, and so a license or letter of promotion would be written out in large letters, and its edges would be trimmed with a wreath and embossed in gold leaf.





ON STUDENT PRIVILEGES

This chapter might be more accurately entitled “Diatribes On Student Excesses.” In this rant, Kitowicz describes how students in the Jesuit and Piarist schools were prone to running riot about the towns, exacting revenge for perceived grievances, and for no special reason enjoying de facto prosecutorial immunity as if they were regular students at the university (where students did, in fact, fall mostly under the judicial authority of the university). The text here serves as a lead-in to the following story, “How Dąbrowski Lost His Head,” and the two practically go together as a single piece. Besides that, this description raises the subject of the situation of Jews in eighteenth-century Poland.

Fairly shockingly for Poles raised on stories of their nation’s religious tolerance, Kitowicz’s description shows school-students routinely harassing Jews on the street, beating them up, and going unpunished. Clearly, the supposed golden age of Polish Jewry of the sixteenth century had deteriorated by Kitowicz’s time to a place where Jews with some justification could feel as though they were fair game for almost any kind of arbitrary ill treatment (including by the courts; see also the chapters “On Torture” and “The Singlesticks Circle”).

Jews in Poland—a country which in earlier centuries had been highly multicultural and welcoming to all ethnicities—were guaranteed freedom of religious belief and protection under the law by two main documents: the Confederation of Warsaw of 1573 and the much older Kalisz Statute of 1264, the latter of which made it a crime so much as to denigrate a synagogue. Both documents were unprecedented for their liberality in Europe of the time. Of course, how privileges work out in practice is always a matter for separate discussion, and there is no question that the religious tolerance of earlier centuries was not a signal characteristic of Kitowicz’s day,

and that age-old covenants were of little avail for Jews trying to assert their traditional rights against harassment. Nevertheless, for the most part Poland was not the scene of pogroms or of the religious wars and strife that occurred elsewhere in Europe.

Kitowicz himself, as we have seen earlier, shows a notable degree of tolerance for and interest in other sects and denominations. While no more than any writer of any time would share the prejudices of their ages, there is no suggestion in Kitowicz's writing that he has any view on the Jews other than as an accepted part of the social fabric of his country, a people who, in accord with their faith, do not recognize the New Testament—a reality he accepts matter-of-factly, not condemnatorily. He had originally intended to write an entire section on Jewish customs and practices, and it is a shame that his life ran out before he was able to do so. Both here and in other places he is openly appalled at their being singled out for persecution by out-of-control school-age youth.

It is this sort of unsavory vignette, which tends not to make it into historical accounts, that makes the Description such a valuable record of the times. Toward the end of this glimpse into student life, Kitowicz shows gangs of school-children from rival Christian schools, Jesuit versus Piarist, attacking each other for no particular reason other than tribal loyalty, with epithets and sticks on the frozen waters of the Vistula—not especially different from soccer hooligans of the present day.

O.E.S.

Public academies¹³⁷ had, and without a doubt still do have, the privilege of immunity, such that neither students nor professors at the Kraków, Zamość, or Wilno academies are subject to the jurisdiction of any court, but only to the discipline of the school. Such privileges accorded to academicians are mentioned in both national chronicles and in the *Volumina legum*.¹³⁸ However, I do not recall hearing, nor have I ever

¹³⁷ Kitowicz is referring here to major Polish universities. The Kraków Academy, founded in 1364, was later to become today's Jagiellonian University.

¹³⁸ *Volumina legum*: a compendium of Polish law as practiced since 1347, published in eight volumes between 1732 and 1782.

read anywhere, that students at other schools, such as the Jesuit or Piarist ones,¹³⁹ get to enjoy similar privileges.

Nevertheless, I can record here that they usurped such privileges for themselves, modeling themselves after the academies, and by so doing arrived at such a level of brazenly defiant behavior, that they were beholden to no other court than the school authorities, no matter what mischief they did. They pursued forcefully and violently retribution for every injury done to them, sometimes actual ones but just as often ones concocted in their own arrogant student imaginations. They would invade homes and haul people out against whom they had some grievance, dragging more than conveying them back to their schools, and exacting their own kind of justice on them with whips. At the same time, they would force their victims to humiliate themselves by making obeisance before the thugs and brutes and begging them for forgiveness. No matter what the rank of the person might be: office worker, nobleman, or soldier who, inadvertently or on purpose, berated, struck or shoved a school student, and failed immediately thereafter to clear out of town or hide himself in some dark corner, he would not escape the stern execution of student justice. Should he have wanted to defend himself, there would have been no way to use any proper weapon against such a despicable mob of delinquent children, for they would set upon their victim from front and rear and let fly with sticks, rocks, and clods of dirt like a swarm of angry bees, beating him about the head, arms, legs, and his entire body and clothing, after which, taking hold of him, they would drag him off to their school as fast as they could.

It could even happen that they would pull gentlemen out of their carriages, and if they caused them harm, it only passed for justice on the same level of importance as if a court decree had been carried out. There was no rescue from such a misfortune other than to yield meekly to the horde, to conciliate with their leaders by making the most extravagant promises, or by making a hasty and fervent attempt to intercede with the Piarist or Jesuit priests. They, for their part, if the abducted person happened to be one of their own friends, or if they wanted to save a person of prominence from disgrace and pain, would make a great show of rushing out of the col-

¹³⁹ The Jesuits, in establishing religious schools throughout the country, were instrumental in ensuring the success of the Counter-Reformation in Poland. The Piarist schools were established later.

lege, and surround the lucky person and push the crowd of students away from him. In the meantime, in order to put a damper on the first flames of emotion they would take the matter of the dispute into consideration, and once they saw that the first onrush of feelings had somewhat subsided, they would rebuke the students for the attack and, if no harm had been done, order them to disperse to their homes under penalty of school punishment. Then they would take the hostage back with them into the college for his own protection. Or, if that were not possible, since there did appear to be some fault on the part of the accused, they would pretend to take the students' side, but in a gentle manner and, as if in a court proceeding, they would try to bring the matter to an amicable resolution. For the most part this consisted in the guilty party's agreeing to render the students his services gratis for a day or two, and to hold a party for the students in someone's home, consisting of honey, crisps, apples, pears, and other things children like. Afterwards, after proclaiming his greatest respect for the students' dignity, he would be free and safe to leave. But he would have had to sweat a lot before that happened.

The untrammelled rule of school-students was endured for many years, until the point that people came to believe that being a student is, among all offices, the utmost in dignity and privilege; and students, too, came to hold the same belief with the same certainty as an article of faith, in consequence of which they were exorbitantly impetuous and hot-tempered in their response to any kind of disrespect.

Jews on the street would be yanked about and pummeled with sticks, for being the ones who tormented the Lord Jesus. Such was student custom that, without any other pretext, they would set upon and beat a Jew for as long as they liked, until the poor besieged Jew managed to find cover. For that reason Jews maintained particular caution around the hours that students were going to or returning home from school. And if by chance a Jew was spotted somewhere near where students were playing, he would hop away as fast as a rabbit among hounds, for the students would leave off playing and rush to beat him up and have such sport of him that the Jew, all battered and bloody, could barely manage to crawl home. And whoever might take pity on the Jew and dare to defend him had better be able to walk off with him and be ready to defend him, lest a larger group waylay them.

Inter-School Rivalries

In any town where two competing schools were located, for example a Piarist and a Jesuit one, or a Jesuit school and an Academy school, as was the case in Poznań, feuding between the schools' students never let up. They would harass each another, call each other names, and names often evolved into bruises. If the professors of both schools had a good relationship, they tamped down such quarreling and fighting by meting out punishment to both sides equitably. But if the professors themselves did not see eye to eye, mutual student dislike grew accordingly, and since there was no good reason for their not liking one another, one may properly call such mutual dislike antipathy. The results of such antipathy could often be fairly harmful, especially in the Warsaw schools, where a constantly simmering resentment existed between the Piarists and Jesuits, which emerged now in this school, now in that one, alternately heightening or lessening passions for quarreling among students in those respective schools.¹⁴⁰

It was the custom in both schools that when the Vistula froze over, they would cross the river to the Praga section of town and visit the shrine of Our Lady of Loreto at the Bernadines.¹⁴¹ If both schools undertook the pilgrimage on the same day, and if they met up on the Vistula, where one group was not able to hide from the other, the confrontation rarely passed without a fight, beginning first with the younger pupils, who called the Piarists "capers," while the Piarist pupils hooted back "marrow-heads," the first taking inspiration from the short jackets issued by the Piarists which they wore after St. Calasanz,¹⁴² their patriarch, the second from the renowned author Father Buzembaum,¹⁴³ whose work on Jesuit theology carried the title *Medulla theologiae*, which in crude Polish translation means "marrow of theology," and they would concoct various offensive jingles to

¹⁴⁰ Since Kitowicz seemingly attended the Piarist school in Warsaw, one can assume that he is speaking here from first-hand knowledge.

¹⁴¹ The Church of Our Lady of Loreto is a large, still-standing ornate church in Praga, the right-bank district of Warsaw. It is Praga's oldest monument. The Benedictine monastery once attached to it has been demolished.

¹⁴² Joseph Calasanz (1557–1648), Spanish priest and founder of the Piarist schools.

¹⁴³ Herman Buzembaum (1600–1668), Jesuit theologian whose *Medulla theologiae moralis* (The Essence of Moral Theology) of 1659 went through over two hundred editions.

go along with them, like “*Piara: psia wiara*” (Piarist: dog faith) or “*Jezuita: psia jelita*” (Jesuit: dog guts), and so forth. The younger children would be first to fight among themselves, with fist and fingernail, grabbing each other by the hair or lobbing snowballs at each other, and after them would come the older ones, followed by their teachers carrying sticks and sometimes even sabers, at times even dragging professors into the fray. All of which would later come before the Papal Nunciature,¹⁴⁴ which would either reconcile the combatants or lay church penalties on them. Such altercations would only serve to heighten the mutual antipathy.

The rectors of both colleges and the prefects of the schools admonished the professors not to visit Loreto both on the same day, and that they inform each other about the day of their planned pilgrimages, but the young masters, who actually enjoyed such conflicts, instead of putting off their journey to Loreto for another day, would purposely schedule it for the same day the other school had decided on. Or one school would intentionally mislead the other and “accidentally” show up on the same day as the other. To be sure, it never came to any major bloodshed or bodily harm, for it wasn’t soldiers doing battle but only school students, whose impetuosity would flee together with the first whack of a stick across their head or nose. These knights of the saber, immediately upon striking a blow, would quickly escape into a crowd so as to avoid recognition and being punished. For such reason they were sometimes even afraid to return to school.



¹⁴⁴ The papal legation in Warsaw.



HOW DĄBROWSKI LOST HIS HEAD

Here Kitowicz abandons his narrow task of describing customs and tells a story, using as a basis the topic of student behavior (on which he takes a dim view, as we saw in the preceding chapter) as a pretext for telling the story of how a certain convicted murderer Dąbrowski, after meddling school-students merely delayed the inevitable result, was put to death for killing his noble employer.

The school system of the time was largely under the control of the Jesuits, a teaching order of priests, whose establishment of schools, as noted earlier, was decisive in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in achieving the aims of the Counter-Reformation. Much of this text's unwitting literary merit lies in the sense of estrangement produced between Kitowicz and the modern reader, who is probably inclined to side more with the students and the Dominican Friars who try to save Dąbrowski, than with the zealous marshal of the crown Bieliński, whose reputation Kitowicz seems steadfastly bound to uphold.

Capital punishment in Poland at the time was generally literally just that: beheading by the executioner's sword, although hanging was sometimes an option. Justice in this story is dispensed by Marshal Bieliński, a figure who also appears prominently in the excerpt on the Marshal's Courts, and who is described by the author as being stern but just. In the American Old West, he would have been known as a "hanging judge."

Kitowicz takes surprisingly little interest in the question of Dąbrowski's ultimate innocence or guilt, but seems instead to side with the reasoning of the court. However, the reader cannot help but pose this question to himself, not being nearly as certain, as Kitowicz seems to be, that Dąbrowski would have received fairer treatment had he brought the slain man's body directly to the marshal's office and reported it, as Bieliński says he should have done. The prisoner Dąbrowski finds himself in a damned-if-you-

do, damned-if-you-don't situation. If his master Żółtowski had been of truer shot, and if he had come up before the marshal for his crime, there is little doubt that his social standing and pocketbook would have saved him from legal retribution: he would have simply paid a fine. In any case, a member of the nobility would have been tried in a separate system of nobles' courts.

O.E.S.

Brazen student behavior throughout the country, born of unwise indulgence, was most evident in Warsaw, where it was once exhibited in the following way. A certain Dąbrowski had spent several years in the Jesuit schools but, quitting the schools when still a senior student,¹⁴⁵ he entered into service with a lord by the name of Żółtowski. That nobleman had a good reputation with a certain tavern-keeper in Praga¹⁴⁶ whose establishment he frequented. One time the tavern-keeper, seeing Dąbrowski arrive alone without his master, in a carriage splattered in blood and otherwise empty, inquired about his master and about the blood in the carriage, and what it might mean. Dąbrowski answered the tavern-keeper to the effect that his master was sick and had stayed home, and as for the blood, it was from a calf slain along the way, when it became too sickly to walk, but he had sold it along with three others which he had delivered alive.

Dąbrowski's answer and the blood-splattered carriage awakened in the tavern-keeper a suspicion that Żółtowski had been murdered. In turn, the tavern-keeper's interrogation awakened in Dąbrowski pangs of guilt, which always cross one's purposes, no matter how well conceived they are. Dąbrowski left the tavern as quickly as he could, but the tavern-keeper kept a close eye on him and, when he saw that he did not return toward his master's house but headed instead for Warsaw, he immediately took off after him. And since Dąbrowski did not tarry in Warsaw but drove further on, the tavern-keeper, increasingly confident of his suspicion that

¹⁴⁵ A *pryncypał* could have been a combined student and live-in tutor in school, whose salary was paid by students' parents, and who saw that the pupils did their homework, and assisted them with it in case of need.

¹⁴⁶ Praga is the district of Warsaw on the right (eastern) side of the Vistula river.

Dąbrowski had murdered his master, informed the local magistrate. The magistrate forthwith sent a search party after Dąbrowski, and they caught up with him in a tavern in Bielany.¹⁴⁷

Taken before the magistrate, at the very first question he confessed that he had slain his master, but justified it by saying that his master was a brigand. On the day he died he was planning to waylay some Jewish merchants who were set to pass through the forest in Okoniów. And when he revealed his plan to Dąbrowski, and Dąbrowski refused to help him, Żółtowski supposedly fired a shot at Dąbrowski but missed, while Dąbrowski, for fear of his life and not waiting for his employer to take another shot at him, whacked him twice on the head so well that he needed no further inducement to die.

However, such explanation little availed Dąbrowski's case before the magistrate's court. Bieliński, the stern but just Crown Marshal, reasoned that if he had killed his master in self-defense, according to the law he should have brought the corpse to his office and declared the whole matter as it had happened, and not try to weasel out of it and ride off with the possessions of the murdered man. He ordered him to be beheaded. However, Dąbrowski still maintained that, in defending his life, he had been forced to deprive a thief of his. Being fresh from school, he still had many friends there, and so some students, inclined to extend pity where none was merited, conspired among themselves and, with the help of some tradesmen and flunkies, they managed to kidnap Dąbrowski as he was on his way to the execution square and convey him to the church in Nowe Miasto.¹⁴⁸ There they sang *Te Deum laudamus* over him as he lay curled up in his death robes and cap, just as he had been torn from the square, after which triumphal ceremony they handed him over to the Dominican friars to aid in his escape.

Marshal Bieliński, thoroughly outraged at their audacity, ordered the students to be sought and seized in their homes, on the street, or wherever the soldiers might find them, and those who were caught were to be given further instruction in the guardhouse with whips, so that for a dozen days or more none of the older ones dared to show themselves at school

¹⁴⁷ Bielany is a northern district of Warsaw, long since incorporated into the city.

¹⁴⁸ Nowe Miasto (New Town) is the part of Warsaw just north of the Old Town square.

(the younger children who had assisted in Dąbrowski's abduction were let off). The ringleaders fled Warsaw to other schools in the country, where they were apprehended. Some denied that they were ever students, while others abandoned their studies altogether. Ever since that time Bieliński kept a sharp watch on students, arresting them for the slightest offence, and humbling them for their former student impudence.

As for what happened to Dąbrowski, I believe that the reader will not hold it against me, even if it does not fall within the narrow purpose of my work, if I describe how it ended. Having been quickly informed that the students, having abducted Dąbrowski from the square, had conducted him to the Dominican friars, the marshal ordered soldiers to surround the monastery and the church so that Dąbrowski might not escape, since the Dominicans were of no mind to release him to the marshal's authority, arguing that a person committing murder in defense of his own life deserves to be protected by the Church from the severity of civil law. The marshal maintained a siege around the cloister and church for several days, all the while importuning the papal nuncio¹⁴⁹ to force the Dominicans to hand Dąbrowski over. The nuncio, however, was of the same mind as the Dominicans. In order to create the impression that he was not meddling in the decision whether to release Dąbrowski or not, and in order to find a political solution that would offend neither the marshal nor the laws of the church, he convened a panel of theologians, two from each monastery in Warsaw, to examine Dąbrowski's case and to issue a verdict in accordance with the laws of holy theology. All of them were of one mind, that since there was no information regarding the reason for Dąbrowski's having killed Żółtowski other than what he himself had admitted, his words spoke rather for than against him, in which case he should be offered the protection of the church, and could not be handed over for execution without insult to the holy canons.¹⁵⁰ The nuncio therefore approved that resolution, and the marshal, not daring to do further violence to the Dominican monastery, called off his guard. As soon as they had left, the Dominicans, disguising Dąbrowski as a monk, spirited him out of Warsaw.

¹⁴⁹ The representative in Warsaw of the Holy See in Rome.

¹⁵⁰ Canon law refers to the system of laws and legal principles of the Catholic Church.

The crown marshal, however, always vigorous in pursuit of his decrees—and now all the more so, insulted as he was by the theological deception—sent warrants to all towns with a detailed description of Dąbrowski, ordering that he be apprehended and handed over to his guards.

Dąbrowski, seeing himself delivered from the executioner's sword, now thought that all his troubles were over, and that the marshal's anger would cool in due time. But the poor wretch was sadly mistaken in his calculations, for four years after his escape from Warsaw, as he went into the municipal offices of Zakroczym¹⁵¹ in order to take care of some transaction with the brothers of the wife he had just taken, he was recognized, seized, and brought to Warsaw, where under the sword he lost the head he had previously been ordered to lose. And so student protection afforded him little, but at least had the effect of his living four years longer than he was supposed to have lived.

As for the students, those in Warsaw from that time on continued to suffer the consequences of taking the law into their own hands, while those in other schools, where the marshal's authority did not extend, were just as arrogant as they had been before, up until the time of the disbanding of the Jesuit order, when both they and the schools fell along with it, as one may see under the reign of Stanisław August.¹⁵²



¹⁵¹ Dąbrowski probably should have escaped farther away than Zakroczym, a small town along the Vistula not far to the northwest of Warsaw.

¹⁵² Kitowicz curiously takes a surprising amount of satisfaction from the disbanding of the Jesuit school system; see note 64.

IV.

LEGISLATURE

and the

JUDICIARY



ON THE SEJMS

This passage gives a slight hint of the legislative morass into which the Polish state, with its "nobles' democracy," had sunk by the eighteenth century. Reminiscent of the American senate, with its arcane procedural rules that have evolved over time in order to thwart rapid action on any matter, and to protect the minority party, the Polish Sejm slowly evolved from a relatively efficient body into one where virtually nothing could be accomplished, because someone almost always objected to something, and the Sejm required unanimity in everything, on the unrealistic principle that all the nobility were equal and had the same interests at heart. Although this state of anarchy was visible for anyone to see, the system was constantly extolled for being the very epitome of democratic freedom by those who exploited its weaknesses for their own ends. On the one hand, because of the ability of minorities to block legislation favoring the powerful, Poland was spared the religious and civil strife of many other countries. However, its inability to act on such basic matters as national defense left it vulnerable to the emerging military powers of Russia, Prussia, and Austria, countries that eventually divided the country among themselves.

The Polish legislative body was comprised of an appointed Senate, which had a mainly advisory role, and the true legislative body, a chamber of representatives called the Sejm, often translated as the Diet, representatives to which were chosen at regional sejmiks, or dietines, to which noble birth was the requisite ticket of admission (for sejmiks, see the following chapter "Eating and Drinking at the Sejmiks"). By the time Kitowicz was writing, the principles had evolved that (a) all legislation had to be passed within a six-weeks' period; (b) all legislation as a whole had to be passed by unanimous proclamation at the end of the session; (c) any representative, at any time and for any reason, without even needing justification, could bring the legislative body to an end, scuttling any laws that had been passed up to that time, merely by saying that he did not agree with something.

The last of these principles amounted to the right of liberum veto, Latin for "I freely forbid," a device that was originally developed to curb royal power. Increasingly it became used to promote the interests of the vastly wealthy magnates by maintaining the status quo, and as a tool used by foreign powers for manipulating the Sejm and suborning its operations by bribery.¹⁵³ Poland's enemies found its inability to defend itself by doing something as fundamental as strengthening the military much to their liking. During the thirty years of August III's reign, only one session was able to pass legislation before being nullified, although Kitowicz claims here that none was. The liberum veto was finally abolished by the short-lived Constitution of May 3, 1791, too late to preserve Poland's independence. In Kitowicz's spirited defense of August III and his self-serving prime minister Heinrich von Brühl, one certainly gets a different perspective from that of most Polish historians.¹⁵⁴ It is worth mentioning that neither the king nor his minister spoke nor understood Polish well, nor did the Poles take to German; nor was August's or Brühl's Latin up to the Poles' speaking ability. Communication between the Poles and the Saxon court was conducted almost entirely in French.

O.E.S.

A good gentleman by all measures, August III was nevertheless sufficiently unfortunate that, during his entire thirty-year reign, no Sejm ever passed any definitive resolution.

The house of the Czartoryskis conspired from afar to dethrone August and, in order to unseat him, they put forward their favorite son Adaś, the son of the Ruthenian voivode—although that ploy did not succeed. After that, they continually promoted the disruption of the Sejm by suborning various persons and then laying the blame on the king, grumbling

¹⁵³ On *liberum veto*, see Catherine McKenna, *The Curious of Evolution of Liberum Veto: Republican Theory and Practice in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1639–1703)* in the bibliographical supplement at the end.

¹⁵⁴ This openly partisan chapter, staunchly defending the royal faction and casting opprobrium on the "familia," or the party of the Czartoryskis and their allies, should probably be read in conjunction with a neutral account. The work by Catherine McKenna, listed in the appended brief annotated bibliography, can be recommended. The standard work on *liberum veto* is Władysław Konopczyński, *Liberum veto: studyum porównawczo-histeryczne* (Kraków: S.A. Krzyżanowski, 1918).

about his miserable reign, saying that the country lacked a government, that the king was a dunce without any knowledge of how to run a country, a know-nothing and master of nothing who has placed the entire rule of the kingdom in the hands of a minister, his Saxon compatriot.¹⁵⁵ The unbridled rule of freedom went so far unchecked, it was said, that the king was prepared at any moment to rescind all rules and regulations with the aim of not allowing any action of the Sejm that might lead to the correction of the nation's disorder and powerlessness.

To be sure, the king did not particularly engage in the interests of the state, but to the extent that he could, he endeavored generally to see that the Republic put itself in order and that the army be enlarged. He was not personally involved in agreements and projects, because he did not know Polish laws. However, to the extent that he was able, through his kindnesses and generosity in the awarding of offices and prefectures, he reached out to those who seemed to be capable of promoting the public interest, settling rivalries and mollifying those who raised objections in regard to his own person and to that of his minister, who was a Saxon, to be sure, but without whom a Saxon king could not have managed. For his part, the minister by no means ran Polish affairs without the advice and consent of the Polish lords. In addition, he never stubbornly insisted on his own way, but instead generally worked toward the end that the Polish lords might pass the resolutions of at least a single Sejm and allow them to go into effect. But all that effort, whether the king's, the minister's, or of those of those Polish lords who worked together with the king for the success of the Sejm, was in vain. The party of the Czartoryskis, while participating in the councils and preparing material for the Sejm (all the while complaining about how the Sejm never got anything done) would secretly arrange a Sejm-breaker for each session who, for the price of several hundred red zlotys, would dissolve the Sejm and quickly get out of town.

In order to disrupt the Sejm, it was not necessary to utilize persons gifted with great intelligence or concern for the public good. Any benighted deputy, supported for election in a regional sejmik by the Czartoryski party for just that purpose, without even bothering to think of a superfi-

¹⁵⁵ Heinrich, Count von Brühl (1700–1763), prime minister at the court of August III, was a skilled diplomat who, as *de facto* dictator, virtually controlled Polish affairs through his manipulation of the king and his control over access to him. See also note 45.

cial reason, would declare in the house of representatives: "The Sejm cannot agree!"—and that was enough for all deliberations to come to an end. When the marshal would ask "For what reason?" he would simply reply "Because I am a deputy, and I won't allow it!" So saying, he would take his seat and sit there deaf and dumb to all entreaties and pleadings of the other representatives that he give a good reason for blocking the Sejm, only replying "I am a deputy." Then, slipping unobtrusively out of the chamber, he would take his manifesto to the chancellery of the Sejm, declaring it to be dissolved, for reasons entirely concocted and fed to him in the private chambers of the Czartoryskis.

Sometimes the reasons used for disrupting the Sejm were incredibly superficial, as for example when Muscovy was at war with Prussia and was sending its armies across Polish territory. The Sejm-breakers used the pretext that since freedom was being trampled under the feet of foreign soldiers, no Sejm could be called free, and for that reason none could be held. Sometimes the reasons could be quite crude and clumsy, for example in 1750, when Rzewuski, voivode of Podolia, pegged by the court to become marshal of the Sejm, with that aim in mind relinquished his voivodeship so that he might be a deputy and, after that, Marshal of the Sejm. The anti-royalist party used the issue of the transformation of a senator into a nobleman which, even if it was unusual, caused no public harm, as a reason to dissolve the Sejm which, for this reason alone, was declared by manifesto to be invalid. For a similar reason the Sejm was dissolved in 1762 when the son of Count von Brühl, the Saxon minister, stood as a deputy to the Sejm, for the reason that he was not considered to be noble under the Polish constitution. True that he wasn't, but he was declared to be such by tribunal decree, and later, as a noble from the family Bryll of Ocieszyn, he accepted the office of starosta of Warsaw, and, what is more, took the oath of office before Poniatowski, who was at the time voivode of Mazowsze and the father of King Stanisław August, without anyone raising any objections. While performing such service he was considered to be a Polish nobleman for more than a dozen years. Such were the reasons, and others like them, that were employed by Poles to disrupt the Sejm.

At last, one year the Polish lords and the king undertook to see at least one Sejm through to the end, and both parties swore allegiance to its completion, foregoing all internecine disputes in the interest of the public

good—right at the point when everyone, to all appearances, with a sincere and open heart seemed to demand it. This was the year 1746, when first of all Lubomirski, *starosta* of Kazimierz, was unanimously invited to take the marshal's staff. Lubomirski was a great stutterer in ordinary conversation, but in public he was a silver-tongued orator, with no stuttering. The qualifications to the Sejm were vetted, the motion to increase the army to 60,000 was passed, and payment for it was worked out, and all of this went forward in the Sejm beautifully and uninterruptedly within the prescribed six-week period. On the very last day, when nothing any longer remained to be done other than read, acclaim, and sign the work as a whole, various representatives began to hold forth one after the other on personal matters for so long that it began to get too dark to read the document or to sign one's name to it. In vain did the marshal, along with many others, ask the gentlemen orators to postpone their private business until another Sejm, and not to stand in the way of the present cause of national salvation, but rather to be mindful of the importance of their signature. But those entreaties fell on deaf ears, for the Czartoryski family had already decided to disrupt the Sejm in just that way. Their representatives kept talking as it became darker and darker and, when it was completely dark, the orations came to an end. Then the marshal, sparked by the hope of a happy resolution, called for candles to be brought. But these flames, each time they were carried in, were met with shouts of protest that it was undignified to conduct the Sejm by candlelight. Each time the candles entered the doors of the chamber they were extinguished with the scarves, caps, and sleeves of people put up to do so. The marshal and the representatives sat in darkness until ten o'clock at night. As one light was extinguished they would try again with a different one, until finally, seeing that the affair did not arise out of the caprices of the rabble, as they thought at first, but had been planned from higher up as a means of disrupting the Sejm, the marshal dissolved the chamber, concluding his moving speech with these parting words: "And whoever is responsible for this, *stet diabolus a dextris eius*."¹⁵⁶

That was the only Sejm that lasted the entire duration, but it came to an end without accomplishing anything, not even so much as a manifesto declaring that the Sejm had been broken. Other Sejms were sometimes

¹⁵⁶ "...may the Devil stand on his right-hand side."

disrupted shortly after the marshal was chosen, sometimes even before he was chosen. Some Sejms stretched out for two or three weeks, like the one in Grodno following the candlelight one in Warsaw, where the blame for disrupting the Sejm was laid on the Prussian king Frederick II, who, it was said, had bribed several representatives to just such purpose. One of these, Rogaliński, the district magistrate in Wschowa, representative from Greater Poland, had one night accepted several hundred red złotys sent by the Prussian king. On the next day he took the chamber podium and publicly revealed the bribery, as proof of which he cast into the middle of the chamber the purse containing the money, at the same time naming others who had also taken money, challenging them to do the same as he. But instead of being rewarded for his heroism, a great tumult broke out in the chamber, demanding Rogaliński's trial for calumny.¹⁵⁷ The lively skirmishes that broke out on one side and the other, coming close to a general melee, ended with the marshal's calling for an end to the session. The very next day a manifesto was submitted by three people declaring the Sejm to be invalid. And so, whether what Rogaliński said was true or not, or whether it was a stratagem for ruining the Sejm, the matter was hushed up, and the Sejm was broken.

It was said at the time that the Prussian king wouldn't even have known whom to approach from among the Sejm representatives, had he not been informed by the magnates. And the deputies would never have dared to commit such a crime as breaking the Sejm on behalf of some foreign faction, had they known that each and every one of the magnates wanted the Sejm to go forward. Because in such case the disrupter of the Sejm, being left without a protector, would never have made it out of the chamber without incurring God knows what kind of retribution, including beating and even death, as happened to many noblemen who crossed the purposes of the great lords. No one would have stood up for him, and even if some poor soul had tried, nothing would have come of it. Given that the Czartoryski and the royal factions were divided within the Sejm, no amount of investigation or counter-investigation could have ever been pursued that would have shed any clear light

¹⁵⁷ According to a note from Roman Pollak, this act should have been attributed not to Rogaliński, but to one Wilczewski.

on how the Sejm-breaker was acting under the sure and certain protection of the magnates under the guise of defending freedom. For it was a universally accepted principle, on which the idea of freedom was founded, that no one could gainsay the word of a lord, whether in a sejmik or as a regional deputy in the Sejm.

Thus, one was permitted to break the sejmiks and Sejms with impunity. It was by far safer to disrupt a Sejm than a sejmik, because the Sejm, composed of elected persons, maintained a certain degree of decorum (except for the two final ones: one of them two years before the king's death, and the other the convocation following his death, at both of which swords were drawn). The sejmiks, by contrast, were conducted at a fever's pitch, accompanied by violence and drink, with swords being drawn against any person attempting to nullify its actions, or for even so much as going against popular opinion, unless the nullifier, bursting into the chancellery with his chosen aides, managed to sign the manifesto and escape the assembly before the drunken mob could chase after and catch him. Only after viewing the manifesto would everyone uniformly conclude that the sejmik could not continue without violating the principle of unanimous consent, that *liberum veto*, which was generally viewed as the *pupilla libertatis*, the eye of liberty. But if they caught up with the dissenter first, they would cut him down and murder him before he was able to deliver the manifesto, and then that eye of liberty was considered safe and sound, even if defended by sabers and at the cost of losing an eye out of one's own head.

Just as no one needed to seek any deep justification for disrupting the Sejm, all the less did people care about delaying the sessions for a just a little while, whether actively or just by throwing Latin phrases around, as was then the fashion.¹⁵⁸ During one Sejm in 1758, a certain Dylewski, representing Stary Dub, for three whole days kept the house in a state of suspension for the particular reason that the Piarist printers had accidentally not listed his name in the Sejm calendar as being a deputy, as if perfection in the printing of calendars fell under the authority of the Republic. And he could not be persuaded by any pleadings of the most eminent

¹⁵⁸ Kitowicz is a fine person to talk. His writing is sprinkled with Latin phrases, only a few of which have been reproduced here. Most writers of his background would be relatively conversant in Latin and expect their readers to be so as well.

persons to change his mind, until all of the calendars waiting in the printing house had been corrected, and until the thusly corrected calendar in a sumptuous binding had been presented to him by the Piarist rector along with his humblest apologies. Only then was he placated, and only then did he allow the Sejm to return to its business.

The connection between the Piarist printery and the Republic was the following: the Piarist printery by royal permission had named itself the Printery by Appointment to His Majesty and the Republic, and so in this connection Mr. Dylewski, strictly speaking, was correct in holding the Republic responsible for any fault of its servant, the printer. For one must acknowledge that according to ancient law a lord must answer for the transgressions of his servant, and this was the reason Mr. Dylewski gave for holding up the business of the Sejm.

Another, Franciszek Czarnecki, Royal Butler and deputy to the Sejm from Wołyń, held up deliberations in the Sejm chamber for two days in the year 1746 because the representatives from Greater Poland put forth a proposal for tax equalization, wanting the Ruthenian provinces to pay the same taxes as the rest, which previously they had not done, so Czarnecki would hear nothing of it. However, his mouth was soon shut by the *starosta* from Ruda. Such interruptions in the activities of the Sejm happened frequently. Even when a deputy, speaking incautiously, spoke a word at which another took offense, the offended party would immediately take it out on the entire Sejm. So people descended on him where he sat: the marshal, other representatives, sometimes even delegates from the Senate, asking that he kindly allow the Sejm to continue its deliberations. And only after he had had his fill of putting on airs, huffing and puffing until he was satisfied by their pleadings and obeisances, would he permit the Sejm to proceed with its business. Then followed speeches of gratitude to that worthy person who had taken pity over the fatherland and permitted its deliberations to go forward—instead of what should have happened: he should have crawled on his knees to each and every deputy, begging their forgiveness for maliciously and stupidly wasting everyone's precious time. Although any one of them could have done the same, because all of the Sejms were preordained to be broken, and time meant the same to everyone. Whether for good or ill, in serious deliberations or in frivolous matters, time was wasted no matter what.

When in such manner the Sejm became useless, they came to be held in such contempt that spectators sitting in the gallery high above would throw apples and unripe pears down at representatives at the rostrum, especially if they were speaking nonsense. Having been struck on the head which, according to the fashion of the day, was shaved smooth as a peach, a deputy would call out to the marshal, "Your excellency, I protest against the disrespect shown by a spectator to my person," showing as proof of such disrespect the clear and incontrovertible evidence of a fresh lump on his forehead, or a black eye.

As a matter of fact, the marshal and the other representatives did consider the throwing of objects at the speaker to be an offense, and not merely to the bald pate of the respected member of the Sejm, but also to the majesty of the Republic. They would entreat the marshal to make an example of the spectator by punishing him for his lawlessness, and to defend them against further affronts from that direction. But it was no easy task to identify the miscreant who had thrown the missile from among the crowd across three rows of people listening to the speaker, for he would be sitting there quiet as a mouse. And even if someone had seen him, because of the fun everyone got out of it, no one would have pointed him out.

Then the marshal would dash all around the chamber threatening every inconsiderate person in general and each one individually with the gravest of consequences. After obtaining neither an answer nor any trace of the perpetrator, the marshal would turn to the deputy nursing his lump and say, "Identify the person who struck you and you shall obtain the punishment you seek." But since that requirement was just as difficult to fulfill for the deputy as it had been for the marshal, he had to sit down. At least there was the benefit that the thusly treated deputy stopped speaking for fear of a new bruise and the embarrassment connected with it. By contrast, representatives speaking straight and to the point suffered no such indignity.

Besides throwing objects at the representatives, spectators had another method of interrupting their speeches. When people pushed and shoved each other off the benches to get a seat, a person could start to fall down off the balcony, and he would start grabbing those nearby for support, and all of them would fall down to the ground together, causing a universal uproar and bringing the session to a pause. Such was the lack of decorum in the chamber of representatives.

Sessions of the Sejm routinely began at ten or eleven o'clock in the morning and lasted until eight o'clock in the evening, or sometimes until nine or ten o'clock. For that reason, any spectator who might want to be present for the entire session, and there were many such, incessantly jotting down notes in their diaries, first had to clean out the bodily filth from around their seat before sitting down. Barely had one person arisen from his spot than another, standing nearby and waiting for a vacant spot, would grab his seat before those sitting alongside, pressed tight next to one another, would spread out into it for more comfortable seating. The situation never let up, and for that reason, anyone who wanted to sit and listen to the entire session could not leave for a moment for any reason.

For their own bodily needs, the representatives had a separate room nearby for such purpose. If one of the spectators sat down in a deputy's seat during his temporary absence (which could happen in a flash, as distinguished spectators pressed in upon the representatives like sardines in a barrel), then he would have to yield the spot back to the deputy upon that person's return. Another unseemly feature among the representatives was bottled beer, which had then come into fashion, which would foam all over just like English beer, and sometimes it would actually be real English beer. After a good breakfast, representatives would naturally be thirsty. Not wanting to leave chambers because of the mob that was always outside, they would have the beer brought to them inside which, in the hands of a clumsy servant or prankster would spray like a fountain over the man's head and clothing, prompting those nearby to flee, and leading to general merriment and mayhem throughout the entire chamber, interrupting the orator's speech, especially when some mischievous liveried servant, holding a glass in one hand and a bottle in the other so that he had no means to stop the spray, purposely ran off with it to wherever people were the thickest.

In order to get a seat, spectators would come to a session as early as seven o'clock in the morning. To do so with a full set of bowels and stay until evening for fear of losing one's place was not safe for reasons mentioned above, so that spectators could get quite hungry, which was possible to solve by bringing along some kind of food in one's pocket or by purchasing something right there in the chamber, about which vendors—men, women, girls, and boys—constantly walked among the benches hawking fruits, pastries, and candy. Even the representatives themselves would call

a man or woman over and buy and eat these things, especially the younger ones during the heat of the extraordinary summer sessions.

For as long as the session lasted in the chamber of representatives, the senators sat in the Senate along with the king, who would usually sit for as long as it took to elect the marshal. After the marshal was chosen, the king would come every day to the session and sit for an hour or two and, if no matter had been concluded in the Sejm, he would leave for his palace, ready immediately to return to the Senate the moment the chamber and the Senate conferred together, as was required by law: first after the election of the marshal, and then after any matter had been passed by the chamber of representatives.

At a joint meeting of the chamber and the Senate, the Marshal of the Sejm would give a speech to the king and the Senate, announcing that he had been elected to take the staff of office, and adding to his announcement the firmness of his commitment to work together with his colleagues toward the common good. The Great Crown Chancellor, sitting in the name of the king, at all the more significant declarations of the Marshal of the Sejm and his fellow representatives would call upon them all to kiss the king's hand. After the hand-kissing, the representatives would return to their chamber. And this happened always, as many times as the chamber of representatives conferred with the Senate, that is, after choosing the marshal and after any business was concluded, as was stated above.

Neither the king nor the Senate had an active voice, for which reason no laws were drawn up in the Senate. All legislative power resided solely in the hands of the knightly class and took place exclusively in the chamber of representatives. On the right-hand side of the entrance to the chamber stood a small table, protected by a wooden railing to keep the crowd away, at which the Sejm secretary and those delegated to write down the minutes were seated. On a bench about half-a-person higher customarily sat representatives from Wieluń. This prerogative fell to the people of Wieluń for the reason that once, at least according to tradition, they had spotted a mistake entered in the protocol, contravening the will of those gathered in the Sejm. When they warned those in the chamber, they received as a reward into perpetuity a place elevated above those writing down the minutes. For it was not the practice then to print or even write out the bills that came up for a vote. Everything was done by voice acclamation, and what-

ever was voted on was then recorded by the Sejm scribe, for which reason it was easy for a contradiction to slip into the Sejm's records, because not everything the secretary read aloud could be heard over the din and tumult of the mass of people. The reading of the minutes by every deputy would have taken too much time and would have defamed the probity of the delegates, which was vouchsafed by their sworn oath.

In the Senate, following the bringing of the newly drafted laws, if any senator or minister wanted to make some suggestion, it was purely in an advisory or, as it was called, passive capacity, although it would be more accurate to call it precatory, for the senator could not phrase his remarks in any way other than as a request to the chamber of representatives that it might consider correcting some item he believed to have been improperly considered. And when such requests were supported by the throne and by a large number of senators, the request was sometimes granted, but sometimes not, since all laws stemmed from the unanimous consent of the representatives. Therefore, if even one person objected to the suggested amendment, it had to remain the way it had originally been approved and recorded with the consent of all.

Provincial Sessions

If the Sejm lasted for a while (for it could happen that a session could last as long as several weeks before being broken), and discussion over certain issues had begun, been moved forward, and had been accepted in principle by the entire house, representatives would withdraw to provincial sessions, while the Sejm in full session was put on hold for a prescribed number of days, generally for two or three. On such days the king and the Senate could take a break. Nevertheless, senators who might have taken an interest in some matter, whether with the aim of supporting it or undermining it, did not neglect to appear at the provincial sessions, running from one session to another; and since they were not able to take active part any more than at the Sejm, they were still able to help or hinder the public interest through their friends by offering them advice, spreading rumors, giving promises, egging them on, and so on.

These provincial sessions were generally held in cloisters, typically at the Dominicans, Bernardines, Capuchins, Reformists, and Carmel-

ites, for reason of their having more extensive dining facilities, libraries, and other amenities. After the provincial sessions were concluded by the deadline, the representatives returned to the castle chamber, where in full session they discussed and concluded deliberation on matters presented in the provincial sessions; and if an arrangement favored by one province did not appeal to the others and was rejected by them in that form, it was reworked in the house at large. And that is how every issue was dealt with.

A third, and the most powerful, convocation was that which took place among the lords who held the Republic by the throat, and on whose deliberations the representatives depended; for whatever was decided there, that's the way it happened, whether in the provincial or in the full sessions. The royal party and the Czartoryski party comprised the two sides that split the entire Republic between them.

Should any deputy be found who was not moved either by self-interest or because of the unimportance of an issue, he preferred to take a rest in his lodgings or to amuse himself in some way, rather than sit in the crush of debates, which could go on for nights on end, as people sweated over some matter that in any case was going to come to nothing once the Sejm was broken.

In this place my Reader may well wonder: if every Sejm was necessarily destined to be broken, then what was the good of working on it in the first place? There is but one answer: the royal party, having the hope and desire of upholding at least one Sejm, worked toward this end with all its might. The Czartoryski party, by contrast, having decided in advance to break the Sejm without revealing its intentions, hired and bribed a Sejm-breaker, and often even several of them, while they, along with the rest of their friends, who knew nothing of the treachery, acted as if in good faith, just as the royal party. It would deal with the other side, propose the best of projects, cajole reluctant representatives, and lament along with the royal party over the miserable fate of the fatherland. Then how was their perfidy revealed? In this manner: on many occasions people wanted to prosecute a Sejm-breaker for being a traitor to the fatherland and force him to reveal the reason for his treachery. As often as this happened, it was always the Czartoryski party that most vehemently objected and resisted, on the grounds that such prosecution would violate his freedom.



EATING AND DRINKING AT THE SEJMIKS.
VETTING DELEGATES

The sejmiiks, or dietines, were regional councils which all gentry could attend and, in principle, vote on an equal basis with one another about matters to be presented to a more general council, including the national Sejm or the Crown Tribunal (see the chapters "On the Sejm" and "The Crown Tribunals"). In practice, they often consisted of partisan factions gathered around greater lords and their paid noble retainers, ready to vote for a cause or to impede it, according to how they were instructed and how much they were paid. The view of the sejmik as consisting of a gathering of habitually intoxicated and quarrelsome squires, each in the pocket of some wealthy nobleman, as described here, is probably an exaggeration. However, this picture did not spring out of nowhere.

O.E.S.

At the regional Sejms, or sejmiiks, lords and the greater aristocracy feasted solidly on exquisite dishes and fine drink ... for the most part on Hungarian wine, of which the more and better of it was served, the greater was the participation.

The petty gentry did not mix with the great lords, but had their own separate tables set up at various inns. In the summer tables were set up in orchards and courtyards under lean-tos, where people would be provided with food and drink for the duration of the sejmik. At each such table, or rather mess station, one or more servants or retainers were stationed, helping to serve. The dishes for the petty gentry were not refined, but consisted of assorted meats: beef, pork, mutton, and various kinds of chicken, geese, and turkeys, whether baked, stewed, salted, or marinated, the better to whet the thirst. Once knives, forks, spoons, and napkins had come into fashion (as will be written about in the chapter "Nobles' Tables and

Banquets”), the petty gentry was served with utensils of the meanest sort: wooden or tin spoons, and the cheapest kind of forks, knives, napkins, and tablecloths, because all of that sort of table item would be savaged by the gentry and distributed among themselves. Sometimes even the tablecloths would be torn to shreds, so that the head-waiter had nothing left to pick up from the table, or at most could rescue some plate or tin saucer here or there. The remainder of the wooden, clay, or tin dinnerware used for the meal would have been spirited away.

Of a morning vodka would be served, and a second and a third round, along with several loaves of bread, lumps of butter, and several roasts cut into chops, distributed around the gathering in a flash, before anyone even had time to sit down. Whoever was thirsty after this could ask for beer. They were restrained from further gluttony so that they might keep their heads clear and maintain their power of concentration for the work of the sejmik to come, as they were led, either to church or cemetery, wherever the sejmik was to be held, to be instructed on what they were supposed to support or to try to undermine.

After the session was over, these ranks would be led back to their mess stations, where the ensuing meal would overlap with vespers and could last past midnight or even until daybreak. Since they were not able to fit in all at once, they would take their place at table one after the other, sometimes taking two or three turns each, after first taking a nap and allowing their engorged stomachs to empty. They would put roasts not only into their stomachs but also into their pockets and leather pouches, which they were allowed to do.

The host’s duty was to provide food and drink in a constant stream. Usually the petty gentry were served wine mixed with vodka, so as to set their heads spinning the more quickly, and beer for quenching the thirst. After drinking this mixture of wine and vodka, chased down by beer, they became intoxicated quickly and at little expense. Having gotten drunk, they would pass out and immediately fall asleep wherever they fell: at the table, under the table, by a fence, in the middle of the street, in the mud, the gutter—wherever their staggering feet carried and deposited them.

After a sweet night’s slumber, even if not in a fine feather bed, such a person would wake up next morning to glimpse the world without his hat, belt, or saber, sometimes stripped to his undershirt by some rascal

or by one or another of his more sober brethren. From there he would go to his sponsor, the one who had brought him to the sejmik, to be recompensed for the loss he had suffered. If his sponsor had been successful in his cause, taking the upper hand over the opposing party, he would more than recompense the losses suffered by his adherents, repaying them belt for belt, hat for hat, and gown for gown—all the things with which the noble gentlemen had abundantly provided themselves when they set out for the sejmik. However, if these deposits, drawn from the rejects of the nobleman's own wardrobe, or gathered from among his courtiers, ran out, he would make good with money, without excessively worrying about payment in kind.

If, however, the sponsor were not to uphold his case and was, moreover, forced to escape the sejmik to avoid being chopped to bits, a gentleman who was in his train for a red złoty on the barrelhead, or two at most, would have to make do without a replacement gown, saber, and so forth, not to mention having to do without an arm, ear, cut-off piece of cheek, or even his life. For they not only had to fend off at the point of a sword the opponents of their sponsor's party in support of his cause, but also defend their own cause when, in a state of intoxication, they picked a fight over almost anything.

The petty gentry were taken to the sejmiks by the lords in carriages, but after the sejmik was over they were sent home on foot, the lords having closed down the eateries and disappeared into the distance. And this is what eating and drinking looked like at the sejmiks throughout the entire reign of August III.

Rugi, or the Vetting of Candidates

By *rugi*¹⁵⁹ was meant the examination of the qualifications of delegates to the Sejm, attesting to their proper selection. The qualifications themselves were called *lauda*.¹⁶⁰ The *lauda* were issued to sejmik delegates upon election, to which were appended not only the fact of their election but also

159 The word *rug*, plural *rugi*, was incorporated into Slavic from the Middle High German *ruoge* (accusation, indictment), from which the Polish verb *wyrugować* (exclude, oust) is derived.

160 Latin: *laudum*, plural *lauda* (praise). Used in the sense of a recommendation of a sejmik.

the demands of the voivodeship, *powiat*, land, or even of particular persons, whose demands the deputies to the Sejm were obligated to support and bring to fruition. But it was rare for them ever to keep their word, and they would end up supporting different and sometimes totally opposite causes from the ones they had been commissioned to support.

And so the first business of the Sejm was to conduct these *rugi*, the word named after the fact that if a representative should turn out to be improperly selected or had outstanding accusations or sentences against him, he would be *wyrugowany*, or excluded from the ranks of the deputies. Sometimes as many as two or three days could be spent on these *rugi*, as two rival candidates from the same *powiat* would arrive at the Sejm, each party presenting his laudum as valid, and impugning the lauda of others; or sometimes a delegate having a mark against him would be elected at a sejmik and, although no one had raised the issue of his condemnation there, he still did not dare to attract attention to himself lest he be cut down; or maybe he did attract attention, but still no one protested, so that finally here, in a place safe from any violence, he could put forward his credentials. The marshal of the preceding Sejm session, along with that session's deputies, was the final arbiter of any objections, and against them there could be no appeal. And since each person expecting opposition to his selection, whether it was justified or not, looked for friends able to rescue him in bad fortune, the *rugi* took place in the chamber loudly and with great commotion, as the forces arguing for removing the person from his office on one side, and those arguing for keeping him on the other, would grow more and more heated. In such a situation friends on both sides would try to reconcile the adversaries by using various means of persuasion: entreaties, threats, promises, or cold hard cash. When nothing availed for the cut-off party, particularly when the power of a magnate was arrayed against him, an improperly chosen deputy, or one with a charge hanging over his head, had to withdraw from the club of representatives, like it or not.

Only after each delegate had either been purged from the lists in this manner or had been shown to be unblemished, would they proceed to elect a new marshal. Even should some delegate be involved in a court case or be under some charge (which with the great lords was rarely not the case, and which occurred frequently enough in the instance of the average gentry),

as long as no one spoke out against him before the election of the marshal, no objection could be raised afterwards, for he now had the backing of the entire chamber of deputies, since he had participated in the election of the marshal, and there was no longer any way to remove him. Any person wanting to raise any further objection had to hold his peace, and the deputy got to keep his seat.





THE MARSHAL'S COURTS

As in most continental European countries, the Polish wymiar sprawiedliwości (administration of justice) derives from Roman or so-called statute law, and does not rely to a significant degree on reference to legal precedent, as in the Anglo-Saxon tradition. Under the continental system cases are decided by one or more professional judges applying the law as they see fit. Poles have the reputation of being among the most litigious of people in the world; in any case, there are more lawyers per population in Poland than in almost any other European country. It takes Kitowicz over one hundred pages to begin to flesh out the byzantine system of regional, district, city, and national courts that were in operation in his day, and the labyrinthine stages one needed to negotiate in order to get anything accomplished in them, all the more so that bribery, corruption, and false testimony were rife at every stage, not to mention the automatic preferential treatment accorded to persons of higher social standing or of bigger pocketbook. Among the showier and more prestigious courts, described here, were the marshal's courts, under the jurisdiction of the Great Crown Marshal, convened for the purpose of maintaining law and order when the Sejm was in session and the king was in residence.

The Great Crown Marshal was one of five royal ministers, and was more or less national policeman-in-chief, the equivalent of today's minister of internal affairs. Kitowicz's model is Franciszek Bieliński, Great Crown Marshal from 1742-1766, whose father Kazimierz Ludwik had been Great Crown Marshal before him. His remit went beyond purely police matters. Under his marshalcy Poland's first fire brigade was formed, and most of Warsaw's major thoroughfares were paved, in acknowledgement of which the broad north-south avenue in central Warsaw is named "ulica Marszałkowska" (Marshal street) after him. Kitowicz is clearly one of his biggest fans.

Sessions of the Marshal's Court were conducted whenever his royal highness the king was in residence, whether in Warsaw or Grodno.¹⁶¹ Because he was in Grodno barely four times during his reign, whereas he came to Warsaw twice a year for the Sejm and sometimes stayed for half a year or longer, the Marshal's Court sessions took place mostly in Warsaw. These courts were divided into civil and criminal. In the civil courts the marshal's appointed judge and his scribe presided, and sessions took place in the mansion in which the judge resided. The criminal courts were convened by the marshal himself in his palace. Whenever the Great Crown Marshal was not in residence at the same time as his royal highness, matters falling under his staff of office¹⁶² were performed by the Crown Court Marshal,¹⁶³ and if neither one nor the other was present, then by whichever Lithuanian marshal was present.¹⁶⁴

Two weeks before the Sejm convened, if the king had not yet arrived in the country—or, if he arrived early, then several days before his arrival—in the principal parts and streets of town the Marshal's Court was proclaimed to be in session by a trumpeter and a herald, to whom the marshal's prosecutor, surrounded by the marshal's armed guards, dictated from a paper what the herald was to proclaim. When time came for the herald to pronounce His Royal Highness's name, the commanding officer called to the soldiers of the guard—“*Presentier das giver!*”¹⁶⁵—and the soldiers would instantly lift the rifles off their shoulders and hold them straight in front of them until the king's name had been pronounced. The same would happen at the mention of His Serenely Magnificent Lord Marshal or, in case the marshal were a prince, His Serenely Enlightened Prince Marshal. After the announcement of the names they would return their weapons to their shoulders and remain in that position until the reading of the proclamation was finished.

161 As an important center of trade, commerce, and culture, Grodno (now in Belarus) was one of the places where Sejms were held, including the last Sejm in the history of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, in 1793.

162 The symbol of the Great Crown Marshal's office was an elaborately carved staff.

163 The Crown Court Marshal was second in importance among the royal ministers, next to the Great Crown Marshal.

164 The Lithuanian marshals would have been present in connection with the convening of the Sejm.

165 “Present arms!” Under the Saxon rulers, army commands were given in German, out of respect for the king.

Following the proclamation announcing that the Marshal's Court was in session, military detachments would begin to patrol the city at night, not only members of the marshal's armed guards but also regiments of the infantry and horse guard, as well as patrols of the royal ulans,¹⁶⁶ whose purpose was to uphold peace and public safety. And whomever they caught on the street after evening taps were blown, whether in a tavern, or dressed inappropriately, or giving bad answers to questions—in short, anyone raising suspicion, they would take him away to their post. Next morning, he would be escorted to the marshal's guardhouse near New City gate, where he would have to justify himself before the Marshal's Court and then, after either paying the soldiers a fine or, perhaps, after receiving his due punishment, he would be released.

It sometimes happened that loyal members of the royal court, or men with the insignia of armored foot soldiers or hussars would fall into the hands of the night patrols when, heads heated by drink, they returned home late at night with drunken shouting and clanking of sabers against the pavement, or quarreling or brawling among themselves, or picking fights with other nocturnal revelers. The patrol, just waiting for such an occasion, would fall upon them by stealth and catch whomever they could, whether weak of foot or slow of hand with a sword, and take custody of them regardless of rank or uniform, inviting them to spend the night in the guardhouse nicknamed the “clink.”¹⁶⁷ There these carousing nighttime wanderers would give their names and ranks to the marshal's judge. If nothing appeared on their account beyond nocturnal revelry arising from having too much to drink, the judge, with an understanding eye, would order them to be released the next morning. But they, too embarrassed to go out into broad daylight from such quarters, politely begged permission from the soldiers—because they so enjoyed the hospitality they had received, the benches to sit on, and the cots to rest on—that they be allowed to stay until the following night. When nightfall came, bidding a fond farewell to the soldiers and their chance friends, they would slip away home without need of a guide, lantern, or escort. If, however, some excessive behavior demanded judicial attention, a socially distinguished culprit

166 In 1717, August II placed a special detachment of ulans under his authority whose duty was to guard the king.

167 In Polish, *koza*, literally, “goat.” Also a Yiddish usage.

would be released on bail posted by his commanding officer. A soldier deserving of arrest would be led under escort of the marshal's watch to the hetman's palace, to be judged by him according to his degree of guilt. Officers and soldiers of various regiments, handed over to their own commands and courts, would be dealt with appropriately.

The mere drawing of a saber in the vicinity of the royal court when the king was in residence¹⁶⁸ was a capital offense. However, we never saw anyone executed for such audacity, even after he wounded someone. The normal punishment in such event was the upper tower, or the lower one and a fine, depending on the degree of transgression—unless the crime was murder, and then either the murderer or the initiator of the quarrel would be beheaded. On occasion, even in the royal chambers, in the castle, or the anteroom to the senate chamber some intruder, pushed aside by the butt of a guardsman's rifle, in the heat of the moment would grab for his saber, and even then the person did not pay with his head but with the tower and fines; or, if he were a military person, by arrest and being led away in chains. For Polish laws are not as stern in execution as they are in conception. Intercession, respect for birth and family, and sometimes a judge inclined to leniency mollify the law's rigor and result in milder sentences. Such is the spirit of the people, being inclined toward leniency in the face of human frailty, as was visible even among our forebears.¹⁶⁹ A certain statute regarding murder, issued under the reign of king Alexander, stated: "*Quamvis iuxta leges humanas et divinas omnis homicida sit poena capitali plectendus, nos tamen Poloni, rigorem illum temperantes, statuimus quod nobilis, occidens nobilem, solvat marcas etc.*"¹⁷⁰ So why, then, should judges remove a person's head for the occasional drawing of a sword, when our forefathers did not demand it for outright murder? If it is stated in the law that someone drawing his weapon in the vicinity of the king should be executed, then this is written only out of respect for the majesty of the king, that some such culprit *can* be so punished, but not necessarily that he *must* be. Furthermore, when at popular convocations and "the king is in resi-

168 The law concerning the drawing of arms applied within a mile's radius of the royal residence.

169 Kitowicz should tell this to Dąbrowski, victim in the chapter "How Dąbrowski Lost his Head."

170 "Although according to the rule of divine and human law anyone committing murder should be executed, nonetheless we Poles, lightening this severity, determine that a nobleman murdering a nobleman will be subject to a fine, etc."

dence," people from various voivodeships—merry-makers, ne'er-do-wells, cardsharps, patrons of brothels, unrestrained youths, and other hotheads ready to draw a sword on any pretext; and every convocation is full of such sorts—it would have been unsuitable to punish all of them with death, for before long the population would be depleted. All of this taken together mitigated among the judges the severity of the law.

The civil branch of the marshal's courts was concerned with matters of violence and brawls, as described earlier; with calumny and libel; with rent not being paid according to contract or word; for a rental obligation not being fulfilled after a contract had been signed and a deposit made; and also with bills of sale, which last matter was assumed by the Marshal's Court according to the principle of *iure hospitum* (right of strangers). Guests staying in the residential town of the king, being subject to no local jurisdiction, were subject in all matters to the Marshal's Court, so that a creditor, whether local or visiting, who spotted his debtor in Warsaw, would call him before the court in which the most speedy resolution of his matter could be pursued.

Immediately after the first hearing, without any further postponement, a decree of payment would be issued and, after that, if it were not satisfied, goods would be confiscated and a fine levied, followed by their conveyance to the creditor. And if the debtor were insolvent, that person would be led straight to the guardhouse; so that anyone who became caught up in a court case endeavored to settle his debt as expeditiously as possible, so as to avoid having his goods or his person confiscated. If the person left Warsaw after receiving a summons (which happened regularly in cases of summons for arrest), his landlord was personally responsible for him.

One must know that cases involving encumbrances on goods resulting from legal action in other courts did not apply here, but only matters having no proper forum elsewhere. Cardsharps and gamblers brought cases here concerning non-payment of debts. However, the majority of cases in the marshal's courts were matters brought by the common people not covered by town law, or by nobility residing outside town with property in various jurisdictions, or living in multiple palaces or manor houses who, believing themselves to be free of the town courts, but in actual fact not being able or not daring to exercise their authority in another place,

refused to respond to any courts other than to the town or the marshal's courts. And since cases in the town courts could drag on forever and did not have such rigorous standards as the marshal's courts, everyone preferred the marshal's courts to the town ones.

Quarrelsome and foul-mouthed women street-vendors constituted a large portion of the cases in the Marshal's Court, resulting in profit to the prosecutor and the court's treasury. Having a quarrel with another woman, or knocking her upside the head, or offending her by flashing at her an obscene body part, such women would heatedly come running to the marshal's prosecutor who, sometimes in writing and sometimes verbally, would send his beadle to summon the accused. The prosecutor himself, against the will of both parties concerned, would treat the matter as if falling under the definition of an offense to public decency, and the decree would result in a fine plus add-ons for mutual reconciliation, sometimes followed by flogging both women, or only the guiltier one. However, when a suit for damages of one party against another had merit, then the case was handled in accordance with regular judicial procedure and was concluded with the imposition of fines, court costs, and imprisonment.

The causes of quarrels among such women were sometimes amusing. After king August's death, one woman street-vendor doing business next to the Old Warsaw town hall, where the principal members of that foul-mouthed breed gather, maintained that Stanisław Poniatowski was going to be king, while another insisted that it would be Adam Czartoryski. Neither one being able to persuade the other by argument, they rushed at each another with hands and claws, ripping each other's clothing, beating each other about the head, scratching each other's faces, and bombarding each other with the lettuce, fruits, and vegetables they were selling, yelling "You lying ape! Not Staś, but my Adaś will be king!" and the other responding, "Fat chance, you barking bitch! Adaś, not your Staś, will be king and he'll run your kind out of town with a whip!" A city councilman happened upon the fray, surrounded by a circle of on-lookers. Learning the cause of the fierce dispute, he ordered his lads to take both women to city hall. The council president, having informed himself of the matter, ordered both women to be flogged and their stalls to be placed at different marketplaces so that they might not come to blows a second time.

Having cited such material out of context, I return to the civil mar-

shal's courts. For reason of the police who, for the most part, fell under the marshal's jurisdiction, procuresses and women of ill repute were frequent visitors to these courts, which was done not so as to root out the evil, without which no large town can get by, but rather to lessen it somewhat and prevent its spreading. Landlords renting to such women were also taken to court and were punished with fines and imprisonment. The women were punished with public whipping and by being driven out of their bordellos. However, such assiduous court attention was neither regular nor predictable, but occurred only when a fight broke out among the guests, or when the women could not pay as hefty a fine to the marshal's prosecutor as was demanded, and so they would be punished and driven out of one house only to move into another, taking care to practice their trade more circumspectly and having in readiness—for someone might be spying on them—some respectable occupation at hand, which often saved them from the rigors of justice, especially when the prosecutor did not have a material witness, or when such busy bees turned around and offered their services. In many corners of Warsaw there was no lack of such benefactresses. Nalewki,¹⁷¹ a nobles' quarter, was foremost among them.

The marshal's criminal courts only held sessions in case a culprit was convicted of murder. However, from the time that Franciszek Bieliński took over the staff of the Great Crown Marshal, they were rarely not in session, for that gentleman was no less stern than he was just, and he hastened to send off into the next world anyone who came under his jurisdiction whom he deemed so worthy. Because he was famous for this gift of justice throughout the entire country, criminals were transported to his court from the farthest reaches of the Polish provinces, for plaintiffs in other jurisdictions had a long and costly process to look forward to, with an uncertain result. For example, when some member of an influential family committed murder, and his family tried to exercise pressure over the court, or when a Jew was convicted, and other Jews considered rescuing him from death with a ransom, even the most costly, to be an act of heroism—none of these strategies paid off with Bieliński. Only the queen, an enormously pious and merciful lady, was ever able to get an

171 No-longer-existing Nalewki Street was a main Warsaw thoroughfare, and it was never exactly a "nobles' quarter."

order overturned in the matter of executions, rescuing many criminals deserving of death through her vigorous remonstrations, in the hope that they would amend their lives which, in the case of thieves, happens only rarely. When he saw that some inveterate criminal was not worthy of being preserved in the present world, and he anticipated the feminine mercy of the queen, Bieliński would order the man to be dispatched to the next world without delay, in the meantime locking himself in his office away from the queen's importuning. And sometimes, when he could not manage to hide, and when some base act was needful of punishment, he would simply reject the queen's entreaties outright. However, such justice in regard to miscreants living far from Warsaw went beyond the bounds of his authority, for the marshal's jurisdiction only extended thus far: to acts and transgressions committed within a three-mile radius of the king.¹⁷² But within this domain no one ever questioned Bieliński, and whosoever's head he ordered to be cut off, it was as though the man might never have lived here on earth.

Two weeks after the king had departed, the marshal's jurisdiction would come to an end insofar as the courts were concerned. As for his other remits in the city of Warsaw, Bieliński continued to work on them, and even when he left for Otwock for the summer, as was his custom when the king was not in town, he left his business in Warsaw in the hands of his deputies, who would faithfully execute his wishes. I have written so much about Bieliński because, ever since I gained political consciousness, I knew him as the Great Crown Marshal, and he remained so up until the death of August III and a short time afterwards, about which I will write in another work, devoted to Polish history.¹⁷³

Upon the conclusion of its session, civil matters which had not yet been tried in the Marshal's Courts were remanded to the town court or to the city council of Old Warsaw, according to the social status of the persons involved. Those of whatever social condition who had been incar-

172 The reader cannot fail to notice various apparent inconsistencies in Kitowicz's narrations, here and elsewhere. For example, in one sentence he claims that criminal cases are brought to the Marshal's Court from all over Poland, while in another he states that the marshal's jurisdiction applies only to a small part of Warsaw. In one place he praises the Polish tradition of mercy, while in another he praises the law's strictest application.

173 In other words, in his history of Poland up through king Stanisław August Poniatowski.

cerated but final dispensation had not yet been made were remanded to the same city council, where a better fate did not await them as long as Loupia,¹⁷⁴ the steadfast town mayor, was alive. As to severity and justice, he was Bieliński's alter ego.

The marshal's civil courts were the court of first instance, from which appeal could be made to the marshal himself, but that rarely happened, since the marshal chose such judges that their verdicts needed no correction and who, sitting together with him on the bench, were of the same mind.



¹⁷⁴ Józef Benedykt Loupia (also spelled Luppia), died 1760, mayor of Warsaw in 1724–1727 and in 1734.



ON TORTURE

The present text, shocking for the intrusion of medieval attitudes on justice and the methods of their implementation into what practically counts as the modern era, is Kitowicz's most celebrated, and it stands out starkly from his other sketches—among other things for the author's seeming lack of human empathy.

Torture, which, from the contemporary point of view, is an abominable means of tormenting an essentially already doomed criminal, was a universally accepted part of the "justice" system throughout Europe from the late Middle Ages, including in Poland, up through the middle of the eighteenth century. Exempt from torture in Poland were members of the nobility, town officials, children of fourteen years and younger, the demented, and pregnant women until they had given birth. Although each incorporated Polish town had its own penal code, the punishment was administered fairly uniformly throughout the country.

For the most part torture was applied in cases of capital crime, which included murder, grand theft, organized criminal activity, sodomy, adultery, sacrilege, and witchcraft, to mention the most important. It has been estimated that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, between ten and twenty percent of all criminal cases involved torture in one way or another.¹⁷⁵ By Kitowicz's time, the practice was on the wane, with torture and trials for witchcraft being abolished in 1776.

The Polish judicial system often required that suit be brought by a plaintiff who would bear court costs, especially when the plaintiff demanded that the accused be tortured,

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Marcin Kamler, "Rola tortur w polskim sądownictwie miejskim drugiej połowy XVI i pierwszej połowy XVII wieku" [The role of torture in the Polish urban judiciary in the second half of the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth century], *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 95, no. 3 (1988): 107–125.

a circumstance favoring the well-to-do and disenfranchising the poor, since torture was time-consuming, labor-intensive, and expensive. Kitowicz's disturbingly graphic account has been judged to be a reasonably accurate composite description of the procedure as applied in Poland, where torture by pociągnięcie, the technique of stretching the arms backwards until they tore out of their sockets, was the most commonly applied method. Polish courts shunned various imaginatively fashioned alternative methods of inflicting pain, requiring specially constructed machinery, in use in some other countries.

In Poland, torture was used, by and large, as an institutionalized component of the law in order to obtain certain practical ends, namely, to extract confessions and identify accomplices, not as a means of exacting revenge, pain, or punishment—a distinction whose importance may escape the modern reader, especially since the procedure would leave the prisoner undergoing it permanently disabled (although he would likely be put to death anyway), but which seemed natural enough to Kitowicz. Indeed, here the author seems strangely oblivious to the socially, morally, or logically problematic aspects of his subject.

Criminal trials required not only a conviction, but a confession of guilt freely made, necessitating, according to the logic of the situation, that torture be applied in order to obtain a confession, even when the investigation had established guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. The high standard of proof required in Polish courts actually worked to the disadvantage of the accused, in that inquiries often led to a failure to establish guilt definitively, necessitating proof of guilt by using other, more extreme measures. In the case of hardened criminals, torture was applied even when a confession to the main crime of interest had been made, in order to extract confessions of additional misdeeds and to implicate the miscreant's criminal associates.

Following a torture-extracted confession, the convicted criminal would be required to return to the courtroom and repeat before the judges and the scribe writing up the protocol his (or her) confession as being of the prisoner's own free will. A fairly large number of such protocols have been preserved in

so-called czarne księgi (black books), but scribes were inconsistent in noting down whether a "freely-given" confession was obtained wholly voluntarily or only after torture, and what degree of torture—severe, more severe, or most severe, the latter typically involving singeing with fire—had been applied. Of course, many confessions would have been obtained under the mere existence or threat of torture. While people of the time were aware of the fact that confessions made under the duress of pain or the threat of torture were of less probative value, this consideration did not seem to have discouraged its use throughout the civilized countries of Europe into what counts as relatively modern times. As recently as 1766 the legal codex of Maria Theresa of Austria specifies various legally prescribed means of torture in great detail, accompanied by carefully drawn illustrations of the equipment necessary for implementing it.

O.E.S.

Torture was applied in capital cases when, after investigation, the accused either was not sufficiently proven to have committed his crime, or when he was, but still did not want to confess to what the investigation had shown. It was customary in all courts to require the confession of one's guilt—by force if necessary. Although denial of the results of the investigation did not spare one from death, if the investigation had been thorough, a person was still taken to be tortured, a fate no criminal could escape unless he freely confessed to the crime of which he had been accused. If he confessed when under torture but recanted afterwards, he would be tortured a second and a third time. If, after having withstood being tortured three times, the accused still denied his guilt, the judges would reexamine the nature of the evidence and the depositions of the witnesses. If these were still found to be solid, the sentence of death would be carried out, without regard for his denials, which were ascribed to his resolution of mind and fortitude of body. If the evidence and depositions were weak and the prisoner had not confessed under torture, or if he had confessed after the first time and the second, but then denied it on the third time, he would be set free with the possibility of inflicting the same punishment on the party at whose instigation he had been tried. In case there was no certain proof, but merely a probability, and the pris-

oner confessed on either the first, second, or third round of torture and no longer retracted his confession, he would be executed.

If the circumstantial evidence was strong, yet the accused steadfastly withstood the torture, he would be released, but the party instigating the procedure would not be subject to punishment for subjecting the accused to torment since the grounds were strong, as said above, to the point of veracity. For the most part such torturing of people who were sometimes innocent went unpunished for the reason that the prisoners were either vagabonds or the subjects of their masters who had handed them over to be tortured, or the lowest kind of riffraff with no one to take their part. For their part, those who handed people over for torture had to be wealthy, for instituting the regime of torture was extremely costly.

Torture, or rather the means by which people were tortured, was of the following sort. In major cities beneath the town hall there was an underground chamber set aside for the purpose. Into one of the walls a sturdy iron hook and ring of the same thickness would be planted about two and a half cubits¹⁷⁶ above the ground. In the other wall one would find the same kind of hook and ring about a cubit above the floor. In the middle of the chamber a low bench would be placed¹⁷⁷ on which the executioner would set the prisoner with his hands tied behind his back with a rope. With another rope his legs would be tied together, and the end of the rope would be firmly attached to the lower ring. Another line, long, slim, and well-greased with tallow for easy sliding, would be passed around the rope binding the arms and threaded through the higher ring. The executioner¹⁷⁸ would hold this line by one end, wrapping it a couple of times around his wrist lest it slip out of his grip when he pulled on it.

Having thus arranged the prisoner, and standing close beside him, he tugged lightly on the line until it was straight across the distance from the arms of the accused to the rings, so that neither the ring nor the line hung limp but were taught. Over to one side, next to the wall opposite the prisoner, a small table and stools would be placed with an inkwell, pen,

¹⁷⁶ About a meter and a half.

¹⁷⁷ In other descriptions of this method, the apparatus on which the prisoner would be placed is described as a *konik* (hobby horse). The prisoner sat astride it.

¹⁷⁸ The *kat*, or executioner, was also responsible for torturing prisoners. His assistant was called a *hycel*, in contemporary Polish a colloquial word for “dog-catcher.”

and paper on the table, at which the town head¹⁷⁹ and one or two jurors would sit, with the town scribe at one corner. When all had been prepared, the town prosecutor, standing next to the town head, would give a brief speech in the name of the plaintiff, who would be present or not, as he pleased, in which he requested of the honorable magistrate—since the prisoner does not want to confess of his own free will to the crime he has committed—that he be consigned to torture according to sacred justice. The town head would then first ask the prisoner what was his social condition, what his faith was, where he was born, how had he been engaged from his youth up until the time of his recent captivity, whether he had ever been previously accused, convicted, or subjected to torture for a similar crime. When the prisoner had answered all of these questions as he understood them, and the scribe had noted down the deposition, the town head would come to the business at hand. Speaking gently to the prisoner by name, he would say,

It seems that you (or your honor¹⁸⁰) have committed this robbery, or this murder. Confess of your own free will; don't let yourself be tortured. Denial will not help you in the least. Whether or not you confess, you will not escape death, for all of the evidence indicates that you and no one else have done this. By confessing of your own free will, you will not undergo the tortures that have been prepared for you. In consideration of your freely-given confession the court will condemn you to a kinder death; and if you have committed this crime out of dire poverty (for example, in the case of robbery) or out of carelessness, or in the heat of the moment (in the case of murder), at the instigation of another, or out of foolishness (in the case of witchcraft), having learned this from another more senior witch or wizard, confess, and perhaps the court will spare your life out of regard for your humility.

If the prisoner has not confessed upon hearing these first gentle persuasions, the town head would once again enjoin him in the name of all

179 The word used is *wójt*.

180 Depending on his or her social status, the prisoner would be addressed using either informal or formal grammatical forms.

that is holy, for the salvation of his soul which he risks losing should he not take his sin upon himself and, through obstinacy, expose his sinful body to torment. If these exhortations fail to produce results, the town head would say to the prosecutor, "Mister prosecutor, tell the master to proceed according to the law." The prosecutor would then call to the executioner, "Master, proceed according to the law." Before proceeding to execute the command, the executioner would call out three times: "Respected gentlemen at the table and before the table (meaning by this those seated at the table and the prosecutor standing next to it): is this your will or is it not?" Each time the prosecutor would answer "It is our will." Only then would the executioner yank on the string, or rather the line, whose end he held in his hand, as described above, upon which the arms of the prisoner would begin to tear out of their sockets as they were lifted up over the back of his head until they were of equal height with it. The body position of the prisoner was such that the upper part followed the direction of the line, while his buttocks remained on the stool. The outstretched legs, bound to the hook, would hang as if in the air. The prisoner would cry out in a terrible voice at the top of his lungs: "I am not guilty! I confess to nothing! Don't torture me! I adjure you before the terrible judgment of God, let me go!" and other such things. Or, if he was of weak disposition, he would beg for relief and, receiving it, confess to the crime for which he was accused and would even go on to tell of various other misdeeds he had committed during his life, for, besides the crime at hand, the judges never failed to examine him on his entire life. After such a confession, he was no longer tortured. But if he did not want to confess to anything, or if he confessed to other crimes but not to the present one, he was kept in the body position of the first instance, in other words, in the stretched-out position and, once again preceded by the orders and questions of the magistrate, prosecutor, and executioner, he was pulled tighter.

For the second stage the executioner enlisted the help of his assistant. Both of them would then pull on the line with all their might. The prisoner would be stretched taut as a string, his arms twisted backwards and standing over his head in a straight line with his body. A deep cavity would open up in his chest into which his head would roll. The whole person would be suspended in the air, no longer touching his mount. All his ribs, joints, and bones would be so visible that one could practically count

them. For, before torturing, miscreants of either sex would be stripped naked except for their private parts which were wrapped in a small cloth. At this point the prisoner would summon his last breath trying to let out a scream or would appear to release it through all his natural openings, vomiting out with a thunderous cough thick, watery, mucous exhalations that offended the nose and presented a disgusting sight, for which reason all those who either had to or wanted to be expeditors, executors, or witnesses to such tortures had to have in readiness incense and strong drink for driving off the stench and for fortifying the heart as it grew faint with compassion. Some prisoners, overpowered by fainting, would seem to fall asleep, giving no sign of life except for the vapor coming out of their mouth as tested with a mirror. If he stayed silent overly long, the prisoner was forced to respond with a new manner of torment, whose description will follow shortly.

Should it happen that a prisoner actually died during the course of torture, everything immediately came to an end.¹⁸¹ The decedent was buried, and the matter was lost. There were also such criminals who, manfully withstanding the worst of torments to the amazement of all, instead of asking for relief, cast the vilest of curses toward the plaintiff and judges. Such persons came most often from among the thieves.

After the second stage of torture, which I have just described, seeing that the prisoner was determined in his obstinacy, they would place his legs in irons having sharp protuberances like teeth, composed of two parts, through which passed screws at both ends. With these screws the executioner's assistant would fasten the toothed iron over and under the shins which, while crushing and crippling the legs, caused the criminal, who was still stretched out and in no way lowered, unimaginable pain. The executioners among themselves called these irons, which were similar to stocks, "Spanish boots." They were not used everywhere, only in the larger towns. I have been told for a certain fact that no criminal ever existed whom such footwear did not soften to the point of confession.¹⁸² The

¹⁸¹ Apparently and surprisingly, death from torture was not a particularly common occurrence.

¹⁸² In fact, the application of heat to the sides with candles, sulfur, or heated plates was the preferred method throughout Poland for enhanced torture. The use of the "Spanish boots" in Poland is described mainly by Kitowicz, and was probably added by him for sensational effect. See Marian Mikołajczyk, "O torturach w prawie miast polskich XVI-XVIII wieku" [On tor-

dropping of burning sulfur or the application to one's side of heated metal plates, which were used in other towns, were not as effective as those Spanish boots.

In other, smaller towns or in the villages, when town authorities were summoned for such an inquisition, the prisoner was tortured in someone's house or barn, stretching him on a ladder, binding him to the first and second rungs, and placing a board under him lest his arms knock against the rungs.¹⁸³ When witches and sorcerers were destined to undergo torture, the executioners—themselves being mightily superstitious—first shaved the prisoner's hair everywhere that nature provides such decoration and concealment, saying that the Devil hides in hair and does not permit a sorcerer or sorceress to confess and, while hidden in the hair, suffers for him or her, taking as the basis for such belief the calm and peaceful endurance of their tortures which, as described above, comes from fainting and loss of strength, not from the good graces of the Devil who, as a traitor and the enemy of man, would not dream of suffering for him. They also shaved thieves, who are naturally resistant to making a confession.¹⁸⁴ Jews, on the other hand, who could be handed over for torture for any offense, regularly underwent the benefit of such tonsorial treatment, although sometimes a Jew, shaved without soap, would endure all the tortures without confessing, as would an occasional Christian. In such case the executioners, in matters physical being great frauds, pretended that some mighty sorcerer had put a spell on the tortures so that they could not take effect. Reportedly they also laid the blame on bewitchment for the inaccuracy of their arm, when they failed to cut someone's head off smoothly with the sword. But such excuses availed little before the learned magistrates, who would prescribe for them a hundred lashes for an unskilled execution.

Having finished the first tortures with an either successful or unsuccessful attempt at getting at the truth, the executioner would lower the prisoner from his position and, if they had been used, he would take the

ture under the law of Polish towns in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries], in *Z dziejów prawa*, no. 7 (Katowice: Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2005), 56–57.

183 This unclearly described method is known primarily from Kitowicz. See Mikołajczyk, "O torturach," 54–55.

184 The shaving of prisoners was apparently not as often practiced as Kitowicz makes it out to be. See Mikołajczyk, "O torturach," 56.

Spanish boots off the legs. He would set him on the stool as he was before the tortures. Taking the twisted arms in his hands, he would twist them back again into place, causing new pain. Placing the arms across the breast of the prisoner and putting his knee between his shoulder blades, by pushing and shoving in various ways he would wrench and knock the arms back into their sockets, which was scarcely less painful than the torture itself. He would then dress the prisoner in a gown and lead him back into the custody from which he had been led to the torture.

Torture on hardened prisoners or on those vacillating in their confession of guilt was repeated up to the third time, with several days of rest in between for the involved person to gather his strength, after which the decree of death or release, according to the circumstances, would be issued.

Torture was never part of any nobles' court, but if any nobles' tribunal, council, or court recommended torture, the matter would be remanded to the town council to be carried out. The same procedure was applied to ordinary death sentences, at the end of which, after the sentence of death, were added the words: "*pro cuius modi executione reum ad officium scabinale civitatis praesentis remittit*"¹⁸⁵—except for the Marshal's Courts of the Crown or of Lithuania, from which, without referring the matter to the town council, the condemned man would be led straight to the execution square. The marshal's jurisdiction had its own soldiers, whereas other jurisdictions, not having soldiers, sent them to the towns, which surrounded the prisoner with younger people representing various craftsmen's guilds, armed for the occasion with halberds and sabers. The tribunals, although they have the assistance of enlisted soldiers, don't want to take charge of him. For one has sometimes seen a prisoner heading to the execution square under the escort of enlisted soldiers when he was of distinguished birth, for which reason there was fear of his being rescued and freed by force.



185 "For whose execution, the matter is referred to the legal council of the present town."



THE CROWN TRIBUNALS

Accounts of rampant litigiousness and the stubborn prosecution of frivolous lawsuits, sometimes stretching over generations, characterizes the works of many early Polish writers, with Jan Pasek, Anna Stanisławska, Ignacy Krasicki, and Adam Mickiewicz coming readily to mind.¹⁸⁶ The reader not familiar with this literature is sure to be impressed by the elaborately-developed court system of eighteenth-century Poland, whose traditions stretch far back into the Middle Ages, and whose intricate workings, especially those of the tribunals, are almost beyond Kitowicz's ability to describe.

A tribunal in the Polish-Lithuanian

Commonwealth was (and, for that matter, in today's Poland still is) a court of appeals, with different tribunals handling different kinds of cases. Judges at the tribunals—so-called deputies—were selected annually at sejmiks convened for the purpose. (For a jaundiced view of the sejmik, see the chapter "Eating and Drinking at the Sejmiks.") The highest courts of appeal were the Crown Tribunal for Poland and the Lithuanian Tribunal for that nation. The Crown Tribunal, established in 1578, met in Piotrków (after World War II, renamed Piotrków Trybunalski in commemoration of its historical importance) for six months of the year. It operated in shifts with a similar body in Lublin (see the following chapter), and consisted of twenty-seven lay members and six appointed by the church. A president presided over the clerical deputies, while a marshal, elected by the majority vote of the members of the tribunal, presided over the tribunal as a whole. The Crown Tribunal was a nobles' court of appeal for cases emanating from nobles' courts of the first instance which, only skimming the surface of the subject, included the so-called chamberlain's courts (for boundary disputes), landholders' courts (for disputes other than over boundaries), and civil or town courts (for various civil and criminal matters in which landless gentry might be involved).

186 For references to specific works, see the selected bibliographical appendix.

The current text is an antidote for anyone inclined to wax nostalgic over the "golden freedoms" enjoyed by the nobility of old Poland, at least by the eighteenth century. By that time, the administration of justice under the system of tribunals was preposterously corrupt and unprofessional, a sanctimonious sham operating outside the law it was intended to uphold. Not the easiest sample of Kitowicz's writing to follow, its gist is nevertheless clear. Among other things, this excerpt exhibits the author's deep contempt for both the legal profession and the magnate class, who are seen here to be operating in close collusion. The Crown Tribunal consistently upheld the interests of the wealthiest and most powerful of the nobles, who would, for example, openly meet outside town before the tribunal had begun in order to work out amongst themselves how impending matters of importance were going to be decided. Benefitting from the system as it was, they had no interest in changing it for the common good. In any case, they were similarly in control of the Sejm, the body that could have reformed the system had there been any desire to do so (see the chapter "On the Sejms").

O.E.S.

The Resumption of the Tribunal

The Crown Tribunal was held in Piotrków, the Lithuanian one in Wilno. Since I am not well informed about Lithuania, I will not describe the ones there in the present place. I understand that Lithuania, because it has been joined together with the Crown in so many various political respects, matches it also in customs, so that the two have become thoroughly culturally melded together, each borrowing both manners and customs from the other. What went on in public gatherings and private get-togethers in the Crown no doubt occurred also in Lithuania. For this reason, from my description of the one nation, the reader may make proper inferences about the both of them, not counting certain variations as to the law that do not fall within the scope of my pen.

The first session of the Crown Tribunal, in other words its resumption, fell by law on the first Monday after St. Francis' Day which, according to the Roman calendar, is October 4. It began in Piotrków and, if it

did not resume on the date the law prescribed for it, it could not be held until a year had passed. According to the law, the Piotrków tribunal was to conclude its business on the Saturday before Floral Sunday,¹⁸⁷ but often it concluded it a week earlier when, according to the preference of the person presiding over the tribunal, it was determined that a given matter should be transferred to the next session of the tribunal; or when there was a lack of cases; or when the deputies' private matters intervened. For the lord delegates followed their own interests first and foremost, the law not governing them, but rather they the law. Whatever the case, for appearances' sake, even if they concluded their work earlier, the date of the end of the tribunal was recorded as stated in the law, on the Saturday before Floral Sunday, and the sergeant-at-arms dutifully convened and dismissed the Crown Tribunal each day until then.

On the day preceding the tribunal's resumption all those who had an interest in preventing particular persons chosen at the sejmiks from wielding the marshal's staff or from performing the office of deputy would convene in Wolborz¹⁸⁸—along with those who were equally determined to support ones who had been poorly chosen, or perhaps not chosen at all in the course of various conspiracies, collusions, and coercions.

There were four parties in the country that acted like mainsprings, propelling forward all political activities. The first was the court party, by which was meant the friends of Count Brühl¹⁸⁹ and his son-in-law Mniszech, the court Crown Marshal. The king, having no business himself at the tribunal, would have been indifferent to its operation,¹⁹⁰ had it not been for these two mixing him up in their intrigues. The second party was the hetman's party, the third that of the Potockis, and the fourth that of the Familia, by which was meant the Czartoryskis, Poniatowskis, and all those bound to them, whether by blood or simply by lust for running the country. The party of the Potockis sometimes joined forces with the court or the hetman's party, especially when a Potocki was hetman; and

187 That is, on Palm Sunday.

188 Wolborz is a small town on the route from Warsaw about twelve kilometers outside Piotrków.

189 On Brühl, see notes 45 and 155.

190 Indeed, the Crown Tribunal was established (in 1578) precisely in order to relieve the king of the burdensome task of personally rendering verdicts on all matters of judicial importance, in effect making this institution the first Supreme Court in Europe to be independent of royal power.

the hetman's party sometimes held with the court party and the Potocki party. The Czartoryski party was almost always opposed to the court, but generally did not meddle in tribunal matters unless some issue of great weight was being decided, or unless one of their faction was a contender for the marshal's staff.

When the three parties—the court, the hetman's, and the Potockis'—formed a bloc, The Familia party, sensing itself to be weak, did not meddle in tribunal affairs, but when the first three differed amongst themselves, or the hetman's party went its own way, the Familia party never failed to take active part in the activities of the tribunal.

The principals of the parties never appeared themselves at the commencement of the tribunal but instead sent from among themselves such younger miscreants as were better suited to putting their party's intentions into action in case they might involve violence. They swelled their numbers with military people who were up to almost anything: generals, lieutenants, and captains, men chosen from among such ruffians as to be quick to raise a flagon or draw a sword.

When the preliminary conferences, agreements, and skullduggery had been accomplished, or when the partisans had (as they say) sniffed out who their allies were and who belonged to what side, either the president,¹⁹¹ the prince-primate (even if he was not personally present),¹⁹² or the Kujawian bishop, as host of the place,¹⁹³ having given a dinner, would inaugurate the entry into Piotrków, in which all those who were present participated. At the head of the procession, in front of the president's carriage, would ride a detachment of horsemen riding chargers decked out in rich saddlery, followed by landowners of various estates with military officers mixed in among them. Following the carriage of the president would come a parade of dragoons, sometimes belonging to the prince-primate, sometimes to the Kujawian bishop, and behind the dragoons would stretch the carriages of various lords, followed at the end by the buggies of less notable citizens. The presidential procession could be so numerous—although not always—that the front end would stretch all the way to Piotrków, while the back end was still pulling out of Wolborz, which is a distance of two

191 That is, the president of the six clerical members of the tribunal.

192 Since the inception of the Polish state, the Polish primate has been the bishop of Gniezno.

193 The Piotrków region fell within the Kujawian diocese.

postal miles.¹⁹⁴ However, when no special pressure was being brought upon the tribunal, the whole presidential cavalcade would stretch for no longer than half a mile. Having thus led the president to his lodgings, and congratulating him on his successful arrival, people would return to their own lodgings without staying for supper, except for the president's close friends and confidants.

The whole night would be spent among those comprising the tribunal trying to determine—according to measures that had been taken and in view of existing circumstances—how best to thwart the opposing sides' candidates, and how to uphold one's own side, regarding the choice of marshal and deputies, or at least the marshal who, as head of the tribunal, had a thousand different ways of bending the members to his own way of thinking or of rendering opposing measures ineffective.

Next day, at seven o'clock in the morning, all those who were to be deputies gathered at the parish church, in which a deputy who was a member of the clergy would chant a votive hymn to the Holy Spirit. After the votive was sung, the Most Holy Sacrament would be carried out from the ciborium into the sacristy,¹⁹⁵ so that in the event of any uproar, which was never lacking, no disrespect to it might occur. Even without waiting for this hour, one party would vie with another to occupy the choice place in the church, which was next to the table at which the Sieradz landholders' court¹⁹⁶ sat, before which, according to law, both secular and clerical deputies were to submit their papers of certification of election, to answer any charges or accusations against them, and—as long as there were no charges outstanding (or, even if there were, but they were able to demonstrate their falsity or in some way come to an amicable resolution)—to execute an oath that they will faithfully perform their duties. All of this fell to the adjudication of the Sieradz landholders' court, for which reason a place near the court's table was of the utmost importance for making or breaking the tribunal. Consequently, whichever party commanded the table had its battle half won, especially if they could back up their cause in other places, both inside and outside the church, with well-placed strong shoulders.

¹⁹⁴ The Polish mile came to approximately 4.46 English miles.

¹⁹⁵ A ciborium is a covered, chalice-shaped vessel containing the Eucharistic host. The sacristy is a room off the sanctuary containing vestments and vessels needed for the church service.

¹⁹⁶ The landholders' court adjudicated disputes among the nobility who resided in a given region.

One of the judges would read out in a resounding voice the names of the voivodeships, in order of seniority of the province, beginning with the one to which the last marshal's staff had fallen, and as the name of each individual voivodeship or land entitled to select deputies was called out, the deputies would respond "Present!" As long as they were not prevented by anyone, they would press their way forward to the table, on which they would place their certification, stating that they were recognized by their local court as being able to serve rightfully as a tribunal deputy, and then they would execute their oath of office. If any man should be under accusation, the person charging him would halt the proceedings and—if he were not close enough to the table, then from across the room—he would hand the basis for his objection to the table across ten pairs of hands which, if it should fall at some point into the hands of a deputy friendly to the person being charged, would disappear into thin air, and the Sieradz court, paying no heed to oral protests unless there was supporting documentation on paper, would accept the oath of office from the deputy, after the execution of which the written charge, even should it be located, was no longer valid. For that reason, any person who had a case in progress or who had some charge against a deputy endeavored to have several copies of it made, which would be distributed among that person's friends, so that it could be delivered from several different directions at once, so that at least one copy might make it to the table; for which reason the person raising the legal objection made sure to place his friends here and there for handing over the charge. All of this took place amidst tumult and uproar, among people gathered together from various voivodeships, often not knowing one another, although it happened in the same way even when they did.

When a deputy chosen at a sejmik was on a list of those whom one of the parties attending the tribunal had decided to deprive of his mandate, as soon as the name of his voivodeship or land rang out, from all sides could be heard loud and riotous voices, calling out "*Vacat! Vacat!*" (absent), while his supporters would respond equally loudly "*Non vacat!*" (He is here!) When a legally selected deputy who, in addition, had the support of others, pressed through the crowd to the table and, standing next to it, undertook the oath of office, the shouting would turn into an even more uproarious clamor. Mixed up as they were with one another, the parties would leap at each other, reach for their sabers and stand as

if ready for open combat, merely waiting for their chieftains' nod to begin hacking and slicing away. The latter for their part would be running around to one another trying to use persuasion, entreaties, and threats, now whispering into another's ear, now loudly haranguing, bargaining among themselves over removals or approvals of deputyship. It sometimes happened that, after first showing their teeth, one party would yield to another and they would put their sabers back into their scabbards, and everything would settle back down as though nothing had happened, but often enough it could happen that, working themselves up into a fighting fervor, they would fall upon one another with swords drawn, cut flesh, knock the members of the Sieradz court about with the flat sides of their sabers, hack their table to bits, and take the fight out of the church and into the cemetery, scattering the entire congregation. After such mutual exchange of pleasantries, as long as there was still daylight, the victorious party would regather at the church, and either mollify the Sieradz court, or bring it back under detention, and rearrange the tribunal according to their wishes.

One could occasionally see people commissioned as deputies who were not selected at any sejmik, and who did not even hold any land anywhere; but, as soon as some lord decreed that he should be a deputy, for appearance's sake he would immediately come into the possession of a landholding. The lord who commissioned him to hold that office would grant him some village or other, in exchange for which he would give the lord a secret voucher asserting that he had not acquired the property by any legal means, that he would not interfere with it in any way, and that immediately upon completion of his term as deputy he would formally renounce the lord's donation. Lest there be any disappointment or deceit in this, the lord making the donation, having created a deputy like a greyhound on a leash, did not neglect to keep an eye on him. This way of constituting the tribunals by circumventing the law could properly be called *ex vi legis* (law by virtue of force), for the violence done to the law was outrageous.

Even though in such important matters the great lords trampled the law underfoot with impunity, they nevertheless did not dare to break the time limits set by the law. And so, if the tumults and fracas described above dragged on until after sunset, the tribunal was broken, for the day of the resumption of the tribunal had been allowed to pass, the day on which,

according to universal understanding, all activities, whether legal or illegal, violent or voluntary, are supposed to be imbued with gravity and substance.

If, in one way or another, the tribunal got underway on the appointed day, everything went forward peaceably and amicably. The night revolved around drinking and congratulating the victorious side on its victory and, if no violence had occurred, on congratulating themselves on the public's success—so long as there was something of that nature on which to congratulate the public, which happened rarely. Next day the deputies would assemble in the town hall and select the marshal, who was always some great lord, whether from the court or from one of the parties predestined to hold the office. The newly elected marshal greeted his colleagues with a public speech and expressed appreciation for his election. The marshal's staff, which was always kept in the care of the Sieradz landholders' court, would be brought out, and as it was being handed over, one of its members would deliver a speech to the marshal and to the other deputies. Upon the election of the marshal, the president would generally stage a lavish dinner for all of the deputies and their clients, while the newly elected marshal would host supper.¹⁹⁷ On the third day, an image of the Most Holy Virgin Mary would be brought to the town hall chapel from one of the churches, carried aloft by the president and marshal together, while the other deputies followed them with candles in a solemn procession. The tribunal chaplain would conduct mass in front of the image in the chapel, during which service musicians, hired for the duration of the tribunal, played various instruments or sang the litany. Following the mass, the chaplain would hand the celebratory platter to the president, which he would then offer to be kissed by the marshal and in turn to the other deputies and to the senior lawyers, the so-called patrons. At last, kissing it himself, the president would hand it back to the chaplain.

After this pious ceremony had been completed, the deputies, along with the Sieradz landholders' court, would lock themselves up in the court chamber and set about determining the so-called ordination, that is, how matters on the court agenda were to be managed: which ones were to follow which others, or what were the special duties of the major and minor

197 In Poland *obiad* 'dinner' is consumed at around three o'clock in the afternoon, supper around eight or nine o'clock in the evening.

members of the bar before the newly constituted tribunal (for example, that they not take up people's time with lengthy preliminaries, and that they not allow unknown persons to enter the tribunal and trick clients into thinking that they were members of the bar). The city magistrate of Piotrków would be enjoined to make all efforts to supply the comforts necessary for material sustenance, whether for the members of the tribunal or for litigants arriving to it, and other such things relating to the conducting of cases, ranging from physical comfort to public safety; also, to payments, that is, the monthly stipend for the tribunal servants. All of this came under the heading of the term "ordination" which, after it had been settled, emissaries to the king, the primate, and the Kraków bishop would be appointed—two deputies for each, one clerical and one lay—and they would be provided with personal letters of introduction, apprising the addressees of the successfully begun tribunal. The rest of the day would be spent on eating and drinking, as on the day before.

The Tribunal

Having dispensed with such preliminaries, on the third or fourth day the delegates would get around to judging cases according to the order that had been settled in the ordination. These cases opened with a speech by one of the members of the bar, in which he greeted the tribunal. Either the president or the marshal, being prepared for this, would briefly respond with an appreciative comment. Then the sergeant-at-arms would call out the name of the case from the court docket. After noting that the involved parties were personally in attendance, the marshal would then determine that the case should be postponed until after the mid-day break or until the following day, for it was not in fashion to get down to business all of a sudden, especially since, in addition to the president and the marshal, various of the wealthier deputies or the clients of great lords considered it an honor to show off by hosting dinners and suppers, sometimes for the deputies, at other times for members of the bar, each trying to outdo the other. For this reason, during the first week hardly any business relating to the administration of justice was accomplished, or none at all. The second week resuscitated somewhat these banquet-weary gentlemen, and harnessed them to their task, although it was still often interrupted by vari-

ous festivals, name-days, anniversaries, or by the frequently-repeated proffering of food and drink by the lords for no particular reason.

Justice at the tribunal was meted out in a three-fold way. One way was according to the law and one's conscience—if the case were being decided between equally weak persons lacking any special support from any of the great lords. The second kind of justice was the one that was bought, sold, and traded among the deputies and their rich and powerful clients, the latter having a good reputation among the people, being skilled as they were in using all possible stratagems in order to undermine the integrity of the court, the name for which is corruption. It was not always the case that the deputies allowed themselves to be bribed with plain money. They were equally enticed by friendship, the promise of a future favor in return, or the lure of an ample-bosomed woman (whom fathers and husbands having matters before the tribunal would occasionally bring along as a supplement to weak documentation). The third form of justice arose from the lords who were the tribunals' movers and shakers. Each deputy who had received his mandate through the protection of such a lord (as has been described earlier) became the vassal of his protector. For him nothing held any weight: not a newly offered bribe, nor friendship, nor the enticement of feminine beauty, nor the purity of a case or its documentation, not even the force of law. Their ears were plugged and their eyes were sealed, and the verdict was also handed down equally blindly, in accordance with the commissioning lord's desires.

Whoever lost a case in such a manner was destined to lose it, even if it were the best case imaginable; and whoever was to win, won, even if it had been the worst case possible, for these things were already preordained, left to the deputy's own best conscience, although it is surely a misnomer to call a corrupted conscience a conscience. Sometimes such deputies had obligations regarding one case only, and after doing the lord's bidding they had complete freedom either to uphold sacred justice or, by trading favors, to seek for themselves new sources of income. Sometimes, seeking safety in numbers, they would offer their services in every case in which a given lord had an interest, with certain signals being arranged between them, expressed, for example, in the form of a secret key word contained in a letter commending the case to the person's attention. In the event that it was necessary for some case not to be heard, it was not always possible for the creators of the tribunal to have all of the deputies in their pockets—particular-

ly the marshal, who was sometimes blown by a different wind and showed his teeth to his protectors by skipping over a case, even if it had been listed first on the docket. Or it was sometimes judged urgent that one or another case go forward, even though it might be preceded by a thousand others scheduled before it. In such circumstances the following methods applied. So that a case not go forward, the register, or docket, in which it was listed was closely watched, and when it came that case's turn, the marshal (when he was of such mind) would suddenly toss that register aside and take up another, the so-called *registrum directi mandati* (docket of urgent affairs), which he was allowed to do at any moment; or he would simply declare the consideration of a case to be postponed. When the marshal was not of such mind, the deputies committed to not allowing a case to go forward would suddenly break the tribunal quorum with a made-up illness or unexpected trip out of town, or a several-days-long convalescence in bed, until the time appointed for the case in the register had expired.

In order for a case far down in the docket to make it to the top, they first attempted to persuade the more influential people who had cases scheduled higher up in the docket to allow them to pass through by declaring themselves to be *non sunt*, as if those persons and their legal representatives were not present. The marshal, or whoever happened to be presiding at the moment, taking up the case of powerful clients, would ignore those of lesser influence. He would call out case after case without paying any attention to voices shouting "Present!" while proclaiming aloud and writing down in his court record "*Non sunt, non sunt*," until the case whose consideration had been promised made its way to the front. This method of rendering service to a person for the most part depended on the marshal, and it took its motivation from the deputies with whom he had to pile up points by using this stratagem, and they with him, so that in similar circumstances they could reciprocate, tit for tat. There were such occasions that in a single session five hundred or more scheduled cases would fall at a single stroke, namely, when Crown Carver Małachowski¹⁹⁸ held the

198 The Crown Carver was a largely honorary office whose original function was to carve and taste the king's food. Adam Małachowski (1706–1767), who held the office of Crown Carver from 1755, was twice elected marshal of the Piotrków Crown tribunal, in 1751–52 and 1756–57. He additionally served four times as marshal of the Sejm, in 1758, 1760, 1761, and 1762. For more dirt dished on him, see the chapter "On the More Famous Drunkards."

staff, as he often did, and who, in addition to services done to his friends, brazenly bragged that under his marshalcy all outstanding registers had been dealt with according to schedule. And so the custom became established that petitioners gave up all resistance as futile; those who were switched from top to bottom would meekly transfer their cases to the end of the line on their own, willingly or not, in the hopes of currying favor with His Honor the Marshal.

Judgments for failing to appear in court were manipulated in a similar fashion. The person whose absence was desired would be beset upon by people who would importune on him at his place of residence. His lawyer would be invited to a conference, or it would otherwise be arranged that he could not appear at the town hall at the appointed time; or his witnesses would be detained in some remote place by some kind of made-up business. In the meantime, the court, being in collusion with the person seeking to have the case thrown out, would suddenly call for the register containing it, and in this way the poor unfortunate petitioner, who had been carefully tending his suit for several weeks, had it tossed out for reason of his not being present. Sometimes such maneuvering occurred without the court's collusion but simply due to the sheer cleverness of one side's being better trained in all manner of cunning tricks and legal stratagems.

And, as was said earlier, the register of the day could be taken away at a moment's notice on the basis of *directi mandati*, even in the midst of some other case that was already underway. Under the heading of *directi mandati* fell purely criminal matters, for which it was absolutely necessary to have a prisoner in chains and under a soldier's watch. When someone was prosecuting a case involving expulsion from property or some other case in the regular tribunal calendar involving violence in which no murder had taken place, or it had, but the perpetrator had not been caught in the act, the prosecutor would grab any innocent person off the street and bring him in handcuffs to the tribunal. The lawyer attached to the case then entered a stipulation that the prisoner in the case had been freshly apprehended and brought before the court, requesting that he be bound over for imprisonment. Thereupon the marshal, in accordance with legal procedure, would issue a ticket or memo to the commandant, requesting that the prisoner be remanded to jail, and another to the prosecutor, that he enter the case in the *directi mandati* register. In this way cases from the

ordinary register were transferred to the *directi mandati* register, the purpose being to hasten a matter along, because under *directi mandati* a case had to be taken up no later than three days after the prisoner had been bound over, unless several such matters cropped up all at once, in which case they became stacked up one after the other, each waiting its turn. The case was handled in the following way. First the prisoner was offered the chance to freely confess, after which, if he did not confess (for how could he, since he hadn't done the deed?), he was sent back into confinement. In the meantime, the record of the case, which would have to have been produced by some court of the first instance, was read; for no case of the first "chopping," as they say, i.e., not at least roughly considered by a lower court, could go straight ahead to the tribunal. After the record of the case was read, during which it emerged that nothing linked the prisoner to it, he was released from arrest and issued a note of exoneration, stating that he had been improperly arrested. This didn't make a lot of difference in practice, because they chose for such prisoners people of the basest sort, usually peasants. And now both plaintiff and the defense were satisfied, since the matter made its way to court more quickly, and the main issue between the two sides, inveigling its way into court in this manner, could now proceed along its course.

There were also such persons who freely hired themselves out to be put into shackles in exchange for payment from the side requiring the service. These were generally displaced members of the nobility, cast out upon the pavement after losing a fortune, most often through debauchery, but sometimes simply out of plain misfortune. They would hang about the tribunals looking for one of four different ways of making a living. First of all, as the tribunal was becoming constituted, such a person would join one of the parties gathering a group for the forcible maintenance or removal of a deputy, as has been described above. Secondly, having already squandered the two or three red zlotys taken from the party that had hired him, and having stuffed himself for two or three days on abundant food and drink supplied by the same, only now to be starving, he would walk from lodging to lodging posing as the victim of a house fire or a ruinous court case, begging alms from the wealthy with arms outstretched. Thirdly, he would hire himself out as a witness for certifying that some culprit condemned to death really deserved it, for which service they usually took a

freshly minted talar. According to Crown Law, even if someone had been convicted on the strongest of evidence and condemned to death, he could not lose his head until the plaintiff, along with twelve persons of equal rank in birth to the accused, declared him to be thusly deserving. In order to prove equality of birth among the nobility in such an instance, it was not necessary to trot out one's family tree. It was enough to have some old saber hanging at one's side, sometimes not even in a proper scabbard but just sheathed in eel-skin. And since among honest folk it was difficult enough for the plaintiff to collect eleven witnesses, much less twelve, who would want to weigh their consciences against someone's death, and even should the plaintiff manage to gather together eleven proper people, fully acquainted with the crime, just getting them all to the tribunal, often far from home, and putting them up until the end of the trial posed no small difficulty. For that reason, a plaintiff preferred to hire less costly witnesses from the gutter, who counted the same as the first kind, and who had no scruples as to the justice of condemning a person to death. As to the fourth means, as was described above, for two or three red zlotys they would become hired prisoners, calculating that it came out better to make as many as a dozen zlotys or more at a single try, to eat and drink well in jail for several days on the generosity of their benefactor and, even after being released from their duties, as a person to whom much is owed on a less than trivial matter, to have full access to the man's kitchen for the entire time that the person stayed on at the tribunal, rather than having to drag about begging, often in vain, from one lodging to another.

Among the various dodges and legal subterfuges by means of which deputies were able to do favors for their patrons by speeding up the consideration of a case was the joining of cases together. The point was to curry enough favor with the deputies in order to link one case with another so that they could both be tried together. Often enough such cases were as much alike as a fist is to a nose. For example, Opaliński, heir in tail¹⁹⁹ in Grodzisk, filed suit with Radzewski, heir in tail at Pożegów, concerning an inheritance from the former's grandmother. As soon as the case was called, Mietlicki pressed forward, who was pursuing a lawsuit

199 An "heir in tail" was an heir whose rights to inherit, under so-called ordination, were not subject to change, but incorporated in a property's founding documents, the aim being to preserve the integrity of large landed estates (see note 82).

against Widlicki concerning the boundaries between the villages of Wydmuchowo and Bielawy.²⁰⁰ Mielicki claimed that since his grandfather was related to Radzewski's wife, and Opaliński's wife was similarly related to Widlicki, it made sense to bundle the first case together with the second. Once this had been agreed to, one case was judged along with the other, no matter that nothing in the dispute between Mietlicki and Widlicki had anything to do with either Opaliński or Radzewski. In order to join together cases like this, the parties on all sides had to be extremely vigilant or, as the wealthy did, to have salaried legal representatives among members of the bar who, seeing that a given case was dragging on, could step forward at the appropriate time and inform their sponsors about the upcoming possibility of joining the case together with another, or in case a judgment by default had been made. The latter circumstance made a better case for joining cases together, since another law existed directing that a case begun in one place had to finish there as well.²⁰¹

The Arian Register

Since after the death of August III the *Registrum arianismi* was discontinued, I consider it appropriate to record here for posterity what exactly it meant and what matters fell beneath it. After the Arians were driven from Poland,²⁰² in order to make sure that there was no way for these heretics to return to the country in which they had been taking shelter, it was decided to compose a special register against them in the tribunal, under which all dissident matters were subsequently considered, for example, the construction of a new church or the repair of an old one without a bishop's approval; profanity by anyone directed against the Catholic Church; an openly dissolute life, including the keeping of concubines and having chil-

200 The case of Mietlicki and Wiedlicki, with its rhyming adversaries, cannot help but remind one of the tale, told by the *wojski* (deputy castellan) in Adam Mickiewicz's novel in verse *Pan Tadeusz*, about the dispute between the two warring neighbors Doneyko and Dowejko (Book IV, lines 760 ff.).

201 The translator, no expert in old Polish law, does not understand the logic of the last two sentences, but it does seem to be what Kitowicz is saying.

202 See also note 44. Arianism was a form of anti-Trinitarianism, i.e., Unitarianism, taking its name from Arianus of Alexandria, who was excommunicated in 321 for questioning the divine nature of Christ. Arian doctrine was popular in parts of Poland from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. The Arians were expelled from Poland in 1658, most going to Holland.

dren with them; not going to Easter confession for several years running; remaining under church indictment for any reason for longer than a year and six weeks; and, finally, for bearing false witness. However, since perjury as such could not be adjudicated anywhere other than in the Sejm, in order for it to have a forum at the tribunals, lawyers thought up a special name for it, which was *laxae conscientiae*, in other words a dissolute conscience. Cases were tried under this heading in the tribunals, but not as a capital offense, as in the Sejm, but only as a civil crime, punishable by fines and imprisonment; and if anyone in the judiciary were to be convicted of such a crime, he was removed from office. Cases of sorcerers, sorceresses, and sorcery were tried in the tribunals under the same heading. This register had once been frightful for all manner of persons who fell under it, since it could also be taken up under the *registrum directi mandati*, and its decisions, even if they were not capital, still resulted in sentences of heavy fines and imprisonment. Toward the end of August III's reign such cases did not pile up so much, as no one believed in sorcery any longer, and pursuing a life of luxury had come into fashion. The exact demonstration of failing to go to Easter confession came to be considered among persons of substance to be an intrusion by the clergy on their rights, exceeding the clergy's legal authority. Since matters regarding tithing, bequests, and wills had been transferred out of the bishop's court to secular ones, by the same token being under church indictment, which had at one time been fearful for those so affected, was taken out of church hands.

And so, little was left for the *Registrum arianismi* to deal with, except for a few private lawsuits concerning protestant churches, blasphemy, and lax consciences. As a rule, protestant churches, harassed as they were, payed royally. Blasphemy, even if the culprit was not put to death, was punished by confiscation of property in favor of the plaintiff; and conviction of perjury or laxity of conscience resulted in the nullification of previous judgments, reinstating the rights of the plaintiff and, in addition, in copious fines benefitting both the plaintiff and the court.

The Antechamber

A decree handed down in the Lithuanian tribunal, even with one side objecting, was immutable. Decrees of the Crown Tribunal, handed down

among equally strong parties, could be contested forever, because according to the law for a decree to go into effect there had to be four successive identical decrees *ex seriis controversiis* (on the basis of the dispute) for the decision to be considered *in rem iudicatam* (a decided matter). But that was not easy to achieve, because whoever lost at one tribunal appealed the decision to the next one, where he either won outright or certain changes as to reasoning or application of the law entered into the decision, such that the first decree was not jot for jot like the second one, but came out favoring one side over the other, so that cases before the tribunal could drag on for ages, and pass in succession to sons and grandsons of fathers and grandfathers.

Heretofore I have written about what transpired in the court chamber or, as it was called then, *in stuba iudicii*, which was the town hall in either Piotrków or Lublin. Now I will describe for the Reader the town hall cloakroom or antechamber, which had its own peculiarities, different from those of other courts. As soon as they recognized that, because of the nature of a case, it was going to drag on, petitioners and members of the bar went out into the anteroom. Particularly on long winter evenings, in order to relieve the gloom of sitting by a solitary lamp burning in front of the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary, they would sing over and over *Sub Tuum praesidium* (Under Your protection) or *Ave, maris stella* (Greetings, O star of the sea). When they had had enough of that, the older among them would entertain themselves with conversation, while the younger ones, always rambunctious, would provoke the older ones into laughter by playing various pranks, lightening the glum mood. Often enough such joking got into people's hair and under their skin, and when it had gotten out of hand, the older ones would try to put an end to it. Or sometimes a quarrel would be taken out into the street with swords drawn, but as if among friends, for young folk are quick to simmer down and end up doing more damage to caps and gowns than causing bodily harm. In the end, such duels ended up being drowned in glasses of wine and bottles of mead, and with the young men priding themselves on their brave and noble hearts.

For their part, the deputies, while they labored over a decision affecting some rich client, kept him strengthened with old wine and tasty tidbits, surreptitiously (even if in plain view of everyone) brought into the town hall.

After the interlude was over, the marshal would knock his staff against the table and the president would ring his bell, at which signals the watchman guarding the door into the court chamber would open it, and everyone would rush in in a mob, the young together with the old in such a state of disorderliness that, pushing and shoving, they would knock each other over, tear each other's clothing, and lose track of their hats, a circumstance greatly aided by the darkness reigning in the cloakroom on those long evenings of Advent.





THE SINGLESTICKS CIRCLE

It is not a new discovery that, with enough time on their hands, idle youth will form themselves into gangs with a well-defined pecking order and get up to no good, including the indiscriminate bullying and tormenting of others who are physically or numerically weaker than they are. Kitowicz's present description, which delves minutely into the customs of the group of ruffians he calls the Singlestick Circle, composed of the retainers of parties to Crown Tribunal court cases, shows a picture of bad impulse triumphing over good that is all the more discouraging in that the group operates just outside the nearby "halls of justice," in full view of the indifferent authorities.

O.E.S.

Immediately after a tribunal had begun, servants of the bar, often joined by the deputies and retainers of various litigants, would gather next to the city hall. There they would form into groups of two and fight at singlesticks.²⁰³ According to the people taking part (whether younger or older), the sticks were either thinner or thicker, and generally made of dogwood or oak. The thinnest ones, finger thin, were for the youngest boys, and the thickest ones, burly sticks like peasant staffs, were for the older ones, but all of them were called singlesticks. When a turn had come around to each person, the one who had beaten everyone else or, after skillfully wielding the singlestick, the one who was generally considered to have come out the best became "marshal" of the circle, and after him, second in skill after the first, would be the "vice-marshal." The third would be the "prosecutor," and the fourth the "vice-prosecutor."²⁰⁴

²⁰³ On singlesticks, see the Chapter "The Education of Children Past the Age of Seven."

²⁰⁴ In other words, mimicking the names of the officers of the tribunal outside whose halls they were loitering.

With these newly elected officers, the whole rag-tag lot would chase after Jews wherever they found them. The Jews, for their part, would have to come up with ransom for the aforementioned officers, and a feast for the entire pack. The Jews responded as obligingly as possible, not daring to stand up to, nor being able to avoid the onslaught of, the most fervent among them who, if they were not satisfied, would not allow any Jew to show himself in the town square without dragging him into the circle and cuffing him about his yarmulka and shoulders with the sticks. After taking the ransom and finishing off the comestibles, which usually consisted of honey, bread rings,²⁰⁵ and wheat bread, they would return to the town hall, and the proceedings of the singlestick circle would begin anew; and this went on continuously for as long as the tribunal deputies were in session and daylight lasted.

The jurisdiction of the singlestick extended to all members of this circle of ruffians equally, and sometimes even to more stalwart citizens who injudiciously passed by city hall while the circle was in session. Such a person as they were able to catch and drag into the circle would immediately be challenged by one of the group, with whom he then had to fight. If he received a bruise on his forehead or a whack across his nose,²⁰⁶ he did not have to fight a second time, but was congratulated, despite his unfortunate slight misstep (which can sometimes befall even the most audacious of fellows) for having become one of their brethren, a colleague in their craft. He was no longer pulled into the circle but, should he ever want to, he had free access to it at any time. Should he vanquish the first person, a second would step forth, and after that a third or a fourth, always from the further ranks, until they tired of the sport or until the person either begged off or bought himself out of the privilege of membership in the fraternity. If the person who was caught simply refused to fight, he would receive a whack across his head and lose his handkerchief, hat, or coin by way of ransoming his way out of the persecution. With this he purchased

205 Kitowicz uses the word *obwarzanek*, the word for the bread rings still sold daily by the hundreds of thousands by street vendors on the streets of Kraków. He may instead be referring to the *bajgiel* (bagel), of similar shape but of different consistency from the *obwarzanek*, originating among the Jews of Kraków in the sixteenth century.

206 According to the rules of school-boy singlestick (see "The Education of Children Past the Age of Seven"), a strike at the head was not allowed. Apparently the singlestick circle here abides by less stringent rules.

his freedom from the club for all times, but he parted bearing an unflattering sobriquet and without the honor of membership.

If a thus-corralled novice asked straight away for the marshal, the vice-marshal would at first stand in the marshal's place, on the grounds that a novice cannot have access to the marshal until he has first vanquished the vice-marshal and the others down the line. If he were then to be beaten by the first, second, or third in line, he could no longer aspire to challenge the marshal. However, should he beat these three, the marshal had to accept the challenge. A victorious marshal received the applause of the entire circle and further enhanced his reputation, while the one who was defeated by the marshal, since he was the victor over those beneath him, did not suffer any loss of glory for his brashness. If he wanted, he could take over the position of any one of the people he had vanquished. But should he defeat the marshal, he would himself be proclaimed marshal, were he to want the office, and he would be led out to extract new tribute²⁰⁷ from the Jews (albeit lower this time than at first). If he did not want the office, the former marshal remained in his place, and his conqueror departed full of glory and respect, although, if he were amenable, he would be invited by the marshal to a drinking bout, after which it could happen that they would try their mettle against each other again and, as can happen in such ventures, there might be a change in fortune, and sometimes the marshal would regain his glory.

It could also happen that stout men from manor houses or of another sort, skilled wielders of the sword, would pretend for sport to be luckless cowards, so as to be caught and taken into the circle just in order to give the "prosecutors" and the "marshal" a good lesson on their own skin, after which the chastened members of the circle were not as eager to accost others like that quite as readily.

It was the duty of the prosecutor and vice-prosecutor to invite youths and other onlookers into the circle, and to force the reluctant among them to fight, whether circle members with each other for training or sport, or with someone new, and to tend to the contest, lest someone do serious harm to another or use trickery, or lest a battle begun in the circle not get

²⁰⁷ Kitowicz ironically uses the word *kozubalec*, a tribute extracted from Jews, usually for various church expenses under a system that, in some towns, was operated by the local church as a virtual protection racket.

out of hand and end up with more dangerous weapons, instead of simply with mutual beg-your-pardons. The prerogative of the marshal was to resolve disputes brought to him by the prosecutors. In the absence of the marshal, the vice-marshal presided.

The custom of fighting with singlesticks was practiced not only at tribunals, but also at major and minor nobles' courts, with the difference being that in other places the knights of the circle did not run after Jews for tribute. These tussles, overlooked by the authorities, took place mainly in Piotrków and Lublin.²⁰⁸



²⁰⁸ That is, at the Crown Tribunals.



DEPUTIVAL HONORS AND PARADES

*A smattering of anecdotes, conventions,
and ceremonies surrounding the tribunals, evidencing the
(sometimes unmerited) respect shown to its deputies, and
embellishing the general atmosphere surrounding the tribunal.*

O.E.S.

Each evening, the commander of the garrison assisting at the tribunal would receive from the marshal the parole, or password which, once received, he passed on to the president. Next morning at eight or nine o'clock that same password would be passed on in a letter bearing the seal of both men to the officer in charge of protocol.

As often as one or another of the deputies either walked into the hall of the tribunal or came out of it, or passed by the guardhouse on some other mission, the soldier standing guard outside would shout out at the top of his lungs "*Raus!*" at which signal the officer and his soldiers would hurriedly rush out of the guardhouse, form themselves into a line, and stand at present arms before the gentleman. For the president or the marshal, the drummer would tack on three drum rolls. The same drum roll and show of arms took place for the president's cross or the marshal's staff, as often as they would be carried to or brought back from the tribunal hall.

Everywhere, no matter where, either of the two heads of the tribunal, the president or the marshal, might turn, in addition to their court assistants and serving people, with whom they provided themselves in abundance as their wealth allowed—while also bringing along to the tribunal various young friends and relatives—they were accompanied by a numerous mob of petitioners of modest means, walking bare-headed in front of them, even in the harshest of weather, while behind the president or marshal stretched yet another retinue of lackeys and liveried servants, dressed as haiduks, paiuks, hussars, Hungarians, or whatever, belonging both to

the marshal or president and to those parading in front of them. Those in the second group were more fortunate in the winter than their masters for having their heads covered, while their masters' heads were exposed to the inclement weather. Deputies to the tribunal were followed around by a similar parade, although not all of them as numerous.

It was first Janusz Sanguszko, Court Marshal of the Duchy of Lithuania, and then several years after him president Michał Lipski, Great Crown Scribe, who could not stand this fashion, demanding that those accompanying them in cold and rainy weather cover their heads. However, other deputies did not follow their example, rather liking the idea of people doffing their hats before them. However, such servility and attention to the deputies did not end up making the petitioners any the happier, even if they did hold their hats constantly in their hands, unless they had something weightier than that on offer. Still, one must conclude that this method must have availed someone some time, since the custom was so rigorously observed. Some petitioners by such manner of service were assiduous to the point of annoyance. No sooner would a deputy set foot outside his lodgings than a petitioner would step out from behind a corner and walk in front of him, dogging him from morning to night everywhere he turned. He would only abandon his watch at the deputy's lodgings upon being assured by the household servants that the "most esteemed sir" had no intention of leaving his house again that day, or until that deputy himself, grown weary of such attention, which was more like having a permanent guard assigned to him, got rid of him, either politely or otherwise. This happened particularly when such attention prevented him from paying some private personal visit. One might add here that among the honors shown to the deputies was the legal privilege of being addressed as "most esteemed sir"; when referring to the tribunal in general, one prefaced it with the title "most enlightened."

A watch of two soldiers stood in front of both the marshal's and the president's lodgings, and when the actual marshal or president was not at the tribunal, the soldiers stood guard for those who were deputizing for them. When one of the deputies or clients gave a ceremonial dinner or supper in honor of the tribunal or to celebrate a deputy's—not to mention the president's or the marshal's—name-day, he would summon soldiers to fire sa-

lutes from their side arms when the health of one or another of the more prominent personages was raised with full glasses of wine, the powder for the guns being provided by the person calling for the salutes. In exchange for such service he would toss out several red złotych, and the commanding officer would get a snuff box, watch, or other present, or sometimes nothing at all, according to the generosity or thrift of the person holding the banquet.

Tribunal deputies at all public gatherings were honored by being seated in the foremost places. Even the greatest of lords could not easily out-seat a deputy at table. Before doing so, he would bow and scrape, protest mightily, and generally make a great show of obsequiousness before taking a better seat, yielded to him by a deputy. Downright everything and everyone bowed low before the deputies, even though every second one barely matched as to fortune or talent that of a vice powiat-head under some great lord.

On the one hand deputies were accorded respect from all sides; on the other hand, sometimes the utmost disgrace could befall them, for example when a deputy, all full of himself, would arrogantly insult an honest person or, with head inflamed by wine, enter into excessive confidentialities. For example, the impetuous plenipotentiary of Fleming, chief financial officer of the Duchy of Lithuania, ready to take his turn at a dance with a lady only to be cut in on by a deputy, slashed the deputy across the face and escaped from Piotrków, having been criminally charged by the tribunal. However, at the next tribunal, with the support of his benefactor, he was released from the decree and died a castellan.

For another example, Potocki, starosta of Kaniów, a person stern even when sober, not to mention when drunk, slugged deputy Garlicki in the face at the Lublin tribunal in response to some minor prank done in public. Potocki, being at the same time himself a deputy, and having a great estate as well as soldiers even more numerous than those in the garrison assisting at the tribunal, had nothing to fear, for the tribunal, wary of his strength, unanimously assigned the blame for the outrage, done in its own jurisdiction, to Garlicki who, unable to bear the shame, quit Lublin, abandoned the world, and became a missionary of St. Vincent de Paul. There were many more such incidents, although, since I am not familiar with their circumstances, I will not describe them. I will simply say that in gen-

eral the deputies were respected as gods, as long as they were able to respect themselves, but when some one of them did not know how to bear the measure of his own respect, he sometimes fell into the utmost disgrace.

Polish law held deputies to the tribunal in such esteem that an outrage done to one of them was considered to be an affront to the majesty of the Crown and required that whoever was guilty of such a crime be put to death. However, in all my years I never witnessed anyone losing his head. Either the miscreant did time in prison, was released by a subsequent tribunal, or the matter was hushed up between the parties involved. It is true that none of the petty nobility tested this principle, but only the great lords or ministers acting on their behalf, to whom the law in Poland does not apply, but only the size of their property and cashbox. Because, even should one of the great (or “tumultuous,”²⁰⁹ as they were then called) lords commit the most egregious of offenses, he would not be punished by death but by fines, and not by imprisonment but, instead, by confiscation of property.



209 In Polish, *burzacy*.



THE CONCLUSION OF THE TRIBUNALS

Of the two tribunals, the one in Lublin eventually came to outrank in importance the one in Piotrków. Originally, the Lublin tribunal dealt with matters arising in the province of Lesser Poland, and the Piotrków tribunal with matters in Greater Poland, but in 1767–1768 the two were united in the Lublin one and, in the years 1781–1787, the former baroque Lublin town hall familiar to Kitowicz was rebuilt in grand neoclassical style under king Stanisław August Poniatowski, facts Kitowicz omits to mention, although he usually does not pass up an opportunity to criticize Poniatowski for one thing or another. From reading the texts about the two tribunals, one gets a good run-down of the aristocratic families who were the movers and shakers in eighteenth-century Polish political life.

—O.E.S.

After Piotrków, the tribunal moved to Lublin. Its initial day was White Sunday or, in Latin, *post dominican conductus Paschae* (first Sunday after Easter). If the president's entry to Piotrków was accompanied by great fanfare, then the entry of the marshal to Lublin was, if anything, equally full of pomp, or even more so. After all, for the resumption of the tribunal in Piotrków, where it was frequently necessary to put one's skin on the line, the principals to the cases did not necessarily show themselves, but only sent their subalterns or assistants. However, in Lublin things were calmer, as the mightiest lords convened to assist the marshal with his entrance: the Potockis, Lubomirskis, Czartoryskis, Rzewuskis, Tarlos, Zamoyskis, Poniatowskis, and other wealthy Ruthenian citizens—everyone except the great hetmans, who did not care to sully their dignity for the sake of such carnivals.

The entrance of the marshal began from some village about a mile or a half mile away from Lublin, where the marshal or some friend of his had

a house, and from this place the marshal led a grand procession of courtiers, carriages, citizens, military detachments, and various other elements, straight to the city hall where the Lublin land court, as the guardian of the tribunal's books and acts, sat down with the deputies without any complimentary words of greeting and declared the tribunal to be "resumed," that is, open for business, the declaration of which was read aloud by one of the court judges, typically the scribe, who would be the least senior member of the court. Following this legal ceremony, the marshal would declare deliberations to be postponed until the following day. Having accomplished this much, which was all the resumption of the tribunal consisted of, everyone left.

If the marshal had his lodgings at some distance in a suburb (as he usually did), then as much of the cavalcade as could crowd into the space between his residence and the town hall proceeded to the hall, while those unable to fit in with the march dispersed to their own quarters. If the marshal's lodgings were close to the town hall—for example if they were right on the main square or within the city walls—he returned to them on foot in the company of the lords, surrounded both front and rear by a multitude of assistants. There he would give a lavish supper, which feast usually took up half the night. Next day, along with his household retinue, he either rode or walked back to the town hall and, taking a seat along with the deputies, he would direct that some matter be called, and, after ascertaining that the parties were present, he would again postpone deliberations until the following day. Then followed a large dinner at the marshal's, supper and the president's, or the other way around, as suited them. The third day began with an attorney's greeting the tribunal on behalf of the bar, and then the same from one of the judges in the name of the land court, with responses of thanks by either the marshal or the president on behalf of the entire tribunal.

It could sometimes also happen, although not every year, but depending on the humor of the marshal and the initiative of the mayors, that town officials, both in Piotrków and Lublin, would also express their greetings to the tribunal. However, such subservience was received indifferently, being considered more of an obligation than an act of politeness. I never personally witnessed that either the marshal or the president would invite the town spokesmen or their colleagues to dinner. The local town

officials, likewise sensing the disdain felt for them by the nobility, never pressed forward into their gatherings. Even if a magistrate, after one of his speeches, were to be invited by one of the aforementioned "highly esteemed sirs" to dinner, out of politeness more than hospitality, he would never accept and the host, having other much more distinguished guests to deal with, would never inquire after him.

I called the chief officials of these two towns mayors and not presidents, in the first place so as not to cause confusion in my writing between the tribunal president and the town ones, and in the second place because the town officials themselves avoided being titled in that manner out of modesty for their office and out of respect for the other, higher one. And that is the reason why, although in all other principle towns the presidents called themselves presidents, in Piotrków and in Lublin out of necessity they adopted two names. During the tribunals they called themselves mayors, but once the tribunals were over, they resumed calling themselves presidents.

Returning to the resumption of the tribunal, after the initial greetings were exchanged, and the order of business was determined, the image of the Holy Virgin was brought from some church to the chapel next to the town hall, as has been described for the Piotrków tribunal, after which the deliberations of the tribunal were taken up, whether in accordance with the law or otherwise, according to the same model, and with the same wheeling and dealing, as in Piotrków which, so as not to bore the Reader, I will not repeat here.

The deliberations of the tribunal came to an end on the day before St. Thomas' Eve (December 19). The marshal bade farewell to his colleagues, to the members of the land court, and to the members of the bar and they, in return, through the mouth of one of their members, did the same for the tribunal, outdoing themselves in composing panegyrics extolling the administration of holy justice in the fervent service of those coming before it although, for their unjust rulings and fraudulent services, more than one of those deputies would have been better deserving of punishment than praise. On St. Thomas' Eve there were no longer any perorations or ceremonies.

Before they left town, the deputies took an oath before the land court, swearing that they had exercised their judgment incorruptibly according

to God, their conscience, and the law. Every deputy took such an oath, but not every one of them enunciated the words distinctly and with a clear conscience. There were among them those who had to stifle a cough (although before taking the oath they had not been suffering from any malady), their faces pale and their hand shaking as if in a paroxysm of fever as they placed it on the crucifix, especially when petitioners who had done business with them before the tribunal called out from the sidelines, "For the fear of God, don't perjure yourself! You were bribed! Those fancy horses harnessed to your carriage, those carts laden with goods you brought along with you, they give you away, you've been selling justice, not upholding it!" However, the deputy, even as his face was streaming down with perspiration, finished taking his oath as quickly as possible and, having done so, stepped into his carriage and in all haste high-tailed it out of Lublin. And, since the honest deputies no longer had anything to do after taking the oath either, they too left for home. It became the custom that, as the deputies went to take their oath, their carriages and luggage would already be standing in front of their lodgings, harnessed and ready for the road.

I just remembered one other thing in connection with the tribunals, whether in Lublin or in Piotrków. The deputies attended church every Sunday, both for mass and the sermon, which was held for them in the parish church in Piotrków, and in the Jesuit one in Lublin, both given by a Jesuit priest, designated as the Tribunal Ordinary. He had almost complete freedom to reproach his audience for their miscarriages of justice, dissolution, and other transgressions of both deputies and the bar and, after all, there did still remain among Poles a certain fear of and respect for religion, such that that no one dared to take offense, at least not publically. A person would shrug off each such upbraiding as though it had nothing to do with him, even while his close friends jabbed him in the ribs, telling him that he was the subject of the reprimand. These sermonizers attempted to learn from specially planted spies about the most secret matters so that later, coloring them with various rhetorical flourishes, they could cast them down from the pulpit on the perpetrators, with everyone understanding full well who was meant, although no one ever noticed any great improvement in the ingrained evil, as much as the sermonizer might vex the person or cut him to the quick.



THE RADOM COMMISSION

The Radom Commission, one of various judicial bodies convened at certain times of the year, mostly dealt with military and fiscal matters, often combined, and also with cases brought by civilians against the military, and vice versa. Out of the many chapters devoted to this or that aspect of the legal system of his time, it would be difficult to find another that so clearly exemplifies both Kitowicz's contempt for the Polish military, combined with his utter lack of faith that the grinding wheels of justice usually produced a fair or logical verdict (although see also "The Crown Tribunals").

O.E.S.

THIS commission was convened in Radom²¹⁰ and lasted for six weeks beginning with the Monday after St. Stanisław's Day (May 8). The presiding judge was always a bishop, and the marshal was a senator. Other commissioners were chosen from among citizens and the military, the former being nominated by resolution of the Senate, and military representatives being selected by the army. Matters falling under its jurisdiction were both fiscal and military, for example: merchants versus treasury officials regarding the overcharging or confiscation of goods; soldiers versus soldiers or officers; entire platoons and regiments against their generals and superiors for underpayment, for denial of promotion, for demotion, for dismissal, for failure to release from service in violation of contract, and other such charges. Also adjudicated here were civil complaints against soldiers who caused harm by marching across lands or in their place of bivouac; from commanders of platoons and regiments dissatisfied by the staples they received; and so on.

210 Radom is located around 90 kilometers south of Warsaw.

If some citizen did not pay taxes owed on his property to some company or regiment, and if there was no way for a soldier's writ, delivered once and again, to force payment out of the village or the nobleman whose possession it was, the owner would be summoned to this court and, after due process, the indebted property would have a lien placed against it and it would be placed under the administration of the army. As a consequence, it would be brought to a poorer and poorer state of ruin, and it would plunge into greater and greater debt, until finally its debt exceeded its worth, and in the end it would become the property of the company or regiment, leaving the nobleman an outcast. This happened for the most part after some domestic war or other public calamity, during which time there was no one in an abandoned village to pay taxes. Once the calamity had passed and agriculture was resumed, the company or regiment having the village in its allotment would come seeking back taxes for all the years since the last payment had been made: even if that company or regiment had been gallivanting about God knows where during those events and disturbances; even if during that time, having been dissolved by decree of the enemy, the company or regiment officially had not even existed; even if it had served on the side of the enemy and had been paid by it; even if it itself had burned the village to the ground in the heat of battle; even if the company or regiment no longer contained a single person to whom a soldier's pay for time served was owed; even if the regiment had only recently been reconstituted out of nothing.

Certain criminal cases involving acts committed in the vicinity of the commission, such as disturbances or fights endangering public safety, could also be adjudicated here. Regimental and company income and expenses also came under review here, as did such things as whether a regiment was up to the strength of men it was required to have by law. All such things took place at the Radom Commission and were dealt with summarily, as were criminal matters brought before it, and whatever could not be dealt with during one commission's session was passed on to the next.

The local Radom bar assisted the commission in presenting the cases, while the Radom town scribe served as recorder. The prosecutors and beadles²¹¹ in like manner served both the commission and the local tribunals.

211 The beadle would have been something like a sergeant-at-arms.

Since I intend to present to the Reader the customs of the people under the reign of August III, I am unable to pass over in silence the feasts, debauchery, drunkenness, and gambling that accompanied the Radom Commission every step of the way, incomparably greater than at the tribunals, as the Radom convocation consisted for the most part of military men only, even if taken from such major and prestigious formations as hussars, armored cavalry officers, lieutenants, colonels, regimental commanders, the reconnaissance corps, and officers of foreign-style regiments.²¹² They would congregate here either as the plenipotentiaries of their entire companies or regiments, or on their own personal business.

Such military gentlemen, having no need of the ceremony of being invited to a feast or banquet, with soldierly familiarity would crowd in wherever they saw a table and drinks set up. The name “companion-at-arms,”²¹³ greatly respected among the populace, gave them free entry to any company of people. More than that, it was dangerous to confront a “companion-at-arms” with an impolite reception, however much of a boor or pest he might be. Anyone who wanted to impress with the fare he put out for his friends, knowing full well this characteristic of military men, needed to have in store an ample supply of drink and to have opened his cellars to ensure that there would be enough not only for his invited guests but also, in the name of hospitality and good manners, for the uninvited ones, even though he had not asked for them and would have been glad to get along without them.

One has to admit: any member of the Radom Commission wanting to entertain had to pass the utmost test of patience. A drunken soldier would call out loudly for a large goblet and raise a toast in front of his company to the host or even to a distinguished gentleman standing nearby, just as if he himself were the host and were toasting with his own wine. Not to return his toast by not drinking would be exposing oneself to the danger of a quarrel or physical attack. The only way to sidetrack such a guest was by delegating someone to do so, in the meantime pouring most of the wine out somewhere, and then returning the toast to his face, draining only the

²¹² The so-called *wojsko autoramentu cudzoziemskiego* (army of foreign model). See the chapter “Foreign-Style Regiments.”

²¹³ The word used here is *towarzysz* (comrade); see also the chapters “The Company Circle” and “The Company Deputation for Tax Collection.”

last remaining drops of the drink. At the Radom Commission one could get an eye-full of shattered goblets, and tablecloths and napkins stained by spilled sauces. Even the clothing of both sexes—the shirt-fronts of the men, and the gowns and décolletages of the women—would be decorated with cabbage stew and other such delicacies. Even ladies, who everywhere are excused from taking their turn at the goblet, found no such exception here, and were obliged at least to put a goblet to their lips and have a taste.

It could happen that an armored soldier from a Ukrainian regiment, drunk to the gills and not far removed from the haidamaks²¹⁴ he had just been chasing after, would raise a toast with full goblet to a lady on the dance floor. He would stand and wait for her with goblet in hand until she finished the dance and when she, being more accustomed to a fan and delicate finery than to being rough-handled, declined the invitation to take the ruffian's hand, the soldier, considering the rejection to be an affront, would pour the full goblet down the lady's dress front, complimenting her thusly: "Since my noble worthy lady does not deign to accept my goblet, at least let her cool her precious titties a bit." To be sure, the soldier would be thrown out by those of his companions who were soberer than he was, and had more respect for the fairer sex and the gathered company, but only by soldiers, for anyone else having the audacity to confront a soldier would bring upon himself a whole regimental intervention. For the name "companion-at-arms" was a rallying cry to which anyone bearing the name would instantly come running from everywhere. There was no way to rid oneself of an affront from or importunity of a soldier other than by calling on the protection of his fellow soldiers and setting them on him.

Although this sort of soldier—arrogant, insolent, and importunate—would often start disputes and quarrels, whether among themselves, with citizens, or with officers of foreign-style regiments, in Radom it never got as far as a fight or duel, for both one and the other were subject to capital punishment, and the court itself, having the sword ready at hand, was firmly respected as being the fundamental and highest military authority. For one to so much as place a hand to one's sword was a criminal offense, and so any sort of dispute mostly ended with shouting, threats, and the postponement of revenge until a more suitable time. And should some brash indi-

²¹⁴ See the chapter "The *Sich* and the *Haidamaks*."

vidual actually reach for his sword, people would tear it out of his hand as if from a madman, cuff him about and expel him from the group or, if that treatment were not considered sufficient, they would haul him off to court, and the court would sometimes punish such rabble-rousers with death or, if someone strongly intervened on his behalf (which everywhere can mitigate the rigor of the application of the law), with arrest, expulsion from the regiment, demotion, fines, imprisonment, or public apology.

While reading such a description of the military, let my reader not conclude that all members of the Radom Commission were of the same disposition. There were also among them entirely moderate and well-behaved sorts who did hold the name of the military in honor, but in actuality those were the members of civilian professions: judges, county heads, county clerks, tribunal attorneys, and landowners of substance. As to how those of soldierly rank and cloth upheld the name of military honor, this will be described more extensively in a separate section about the army. The worst arrogance and crudity could be found among those who, not having any fortune themselves, cared assiduously only about the honor of their regiments and companies, which I will also describe in another place. Officers of troops along the foreign model had better discipline. Being accustomed to respecting their superiors, they were not as unrestrained, but recognized the obligation to bear the rank they wore with dignity, any lack of respect for which was considered a transgression and drew a reprimand, for which reason they were always more pleasant to have in select company than members of our conscripted regiments.

Cards and dice were a second entertainment for military men in Radom. Some, having no other interest or business, would congregate here for the gambling alone. Some would organize large public card parties which anyone could attend. Others would fritter away their days and nights on cards and dice in private quarters, fleecing each other down to their last shilling and shirt. Inasmuch as Venus is the favorite of Mars, a third entertainment was never far away, nor did she neglect to send her ladies-in-waiting from Warsaw and Radom to help entertain the hot-blooded knights, bestowing on them their French finery. As soon as the Radom Commission came to an end, all balance sheets and records were carted off to Warsaw, where they were left in the care of the state treasury scribe and notary, while the decrees themselves would be left in the Radom town offices.

V.

THE MILITARY



THE CROWN FOOT GUARD

Many of Kitowicz's descriptions of the various divisions of the military in existence during August III's reign are descriptive and dry. By contrast, this depiction of the Crown Foot Guard is quite colorful. Following a frequent narrative strategy of his, the author begins with an objective description of the guardsmen's activities, and then ends up lavishly dishing dirt on them. Even so, as disposed as Kitowicz usually is to disparage the state of the military during his time, he seems here to show a grudging admiration for the foot guards' aptitude for brawling, and their crafty ingenuity in devising ways to augment their meager salaries.

Although in theory the foot guardsmen could be employed as infantrymen on the battlefield should the need arise, in practice during August III's reign members of the Crown Foot Guard had no such worry, as the under-staffed and under-funded army rarely ventured outside its barracks. The foot guard mainly served as a security detail attached to the royal palace, the royal castle, and the hetman's palace; and at the tribunals in Piotrków, Lublin, and Radom. In their free time, at least according to the present description, the guardsmen roamed the capital city's drinking spots, exhibiting their fighting spirit by picking quarrels with members of other regiments, especially the king's own handpicked horse guard. Another specialty of theirs was fleecing gullible passers-by on the street with a wide variety of street-savvy swindles. Their skill with a rifle was exhibited both at public ceremonies and in the precision of their send-off salutes at their fellow soldiers' funerals.

The Crown Foot Guard, as a civilian service, had more to do than the Crown Horse Guard. Most importantly, it was always on duty at both the royal palace and royal castle, as it stood watch and manned stations up to the first gates of those buildings, whether the king was in residence or not, except that when the king was in Warsaw, they were accompanied by a band, standard bearers, and two guild woodsmen, who preceded the officer in charge of the watch by three paces. These last wore grenadier caps, with a thin piece trailing down the back, ending in a tiny tassel. They wore soldiers' uniforms with leather carpenters' aprons in front and, instead of flintlock rifles, they carried axes over their shoulders with the blades facing backward. When the king was not in Warsaw, the guard made do without banners and a band. For a long time, this guard had its quarters on the outskirts of Warsaw, until prince Czartoryski, the Ruthenian voivode, who was also the general in charge of the foot guard regiment, constructed extensive barracks for them in the west end of town heading toward Bielany.

On the way to their watch the guard ambled from their barracks without any order or discipline as far as the Dominican church. It was only there that they formed into ranks, at which point the drummers began to beat, the band broke into a march, and the whole detachment marched off at a brisk soldierly pace, keeping time to the music. The entire group marched together in that arrangement as far as the Kraków Gate by the castle, whereupon a portion of them continued marching past the gate, to be escorted into the castle. The remainder marched at the same pace beyond the gate, where a small detachment of them separated from the main body and headed to the Ramparts as far as the palace of the Great Crown Hetman Branicki, to whom this detachment was assigned, although when Potocki was Great Crown Hetman, the same detachment marched along Senatorska Street all the way to his palace on Leszno Street. The principal part of the detachment continued marching along Kraków Przedmieście to the Saxon palace, to stand guard in the courtyard inside the second gate. Their headquarters was a specially built brick building, and they held their watch among stables, the kitchen wing, and various royal administrative buildings.

Men of the second watch, scheduled to relieve the first one, remained in their barracks from ten o'clock in the morning until the same time

the next day, at which hour the first watch gathered up their guards and walked back to the barracks with their banners furled and without the assistance of a band (the members of which had already dispersed home from the castle square), and without the woodsmen, who also did not accompany the guardsmen on their return. Nevertheless, the guardsmen did march along in rhythm to the beat of a drum as far as the Dominican church, their rifles at shoulder arms. As soon as they drew near to the church their commanding officer called out "Halt!" and everyone came to a stop. Next, he commanded that they take their rifles from their shoulders and hang them in back by their straps. After this, the drummers beat out several tattoos in rapid succession, and the soldiers, now at ease, walked back to their barracks at a leisurely pace.

The detachment returning from the royal palace did not wait for the other ones from the castle and the hetman's palace, or for the other smaller groups assigned to various places who would also be returning. It was enough for them to depart together from the barracks in the morning. And so they came back in separate groups, according to which ones had been released sooner or later.

In addition to their service in Warsaw, the Crown Foot Guard went each year to be guards and assistants at the tribunals, first in Piotrków, then in Lublin, and after that to the military commission in Radom, where it fell under a different command from the same regiment. In all some eighty guardsmen would be delegated to such service, under the command of a captain, two lieutenants, and two ensigns. When Prince Janusz Sanguszko, Court Marshal of Lithuania and ordinate²¹⁵ of Ostróg, held the marshal's staff at the Lublin crown tribunal, for reason of the great magnificence of the person filling the office, the foot guard's duty at the tribunal was assumed by the Crown Field Infantry, while the Crown Foot Guard was assigned to the marshal himself, a privilege no other marshal enjoyed, whether before or after. He was accorded this honor as a reward for undertaking the function of marshal at a time when he had no need of such a distinction, being by virtue of his fortune a great lord, if not, for all I know, the greatest. Since he put on no special show in Piotrków, and stayed there for only a short while, saving all of his ostentation as a Ru-

215 On "ordination," see note 82.

thenian lord for Lublin, he was not accorded the same honors in Piotrków as he was in Lublin.

To an extent I have mixed together here the treatment of military and civilian matters, but I was unable to do otherwise, for I would have been remiss in not satisfying the Reader's curiosity as to why the Crown Foot Guard assisted the marshal rather than the tribunal; on which subject I must add that it was to the pleasure and benefit of the guard itself, for they did not have as much to do when serving the marshal as they did when serving the tribunal. For one thing the guard was released from making night-time rounds and, for another, the soldiers received out of the national treasury a supplement to their regular salary, not to mention that their officers garnered the almost daily benefit of eating at a well-provisioned table with an abundance of wine.

It is true that they often had to stand together with their soldiers night after night in order to fire off salutes, but they were willing to put up with such inconvenience, as long as they had the wherewithal to rinse the taste of gunpowder from their throats, especially when the officers were additionally recompensed with handsome gifts, and the soldiers were showered with ducats. Other marshals had some under-officer to guard them, a corporal or sergeant, but Prince Sanguszeko received the service of a lieutenant or ensign. In addition to the officer serving as guard to the prince marshal, all officers, whether from the foot guard or the field infantry, as soon as they were released from duty, looked after his rooms, having at their disposal a full mess and bar and, according to the luck of circumstances, whenever the prince happened to be in a good mood, their service was often further rewarded with a gratuity. That, then, was the reason why no regiment other than the Crown Foot Guards assisted Prince Sanguszeko.

The Crown Foot Guard's soldiers were not selected for their build; they accepted anyone who wanted to serve, even the shortest of folk, as long as the person was not crippled, blind, lame, or hunchbacked. It was a haven for all manner of cardsharps, swindlers, ne'er-do-wells, spend-thrifts, and those escaping punishment for murder or other serious crimes, not to mention elder Warsaw craftsmen thrown out of their guild for non-payment of dues and being, therefore, unable to ply their trade. Whosoever decked himself out in a guardsman's uniform was exempt from all further violence, assault, or retribution. There were also among them such

recruits as came from prominent families, pushed into service on a trial basis by their parents or relatives in the hope of promotion or rehabilitation. Finally, there were among them handsome liveried servants, lackeys, and other comely lads who had been abducted after having been spotted in some out-of-the-way tavern, given plenty to drink, and persuaded to have a guard's cap placed upon their head. Taking such a trial of equipment to be the equivalent of a solemn oath, willy-nilly with no further ceremony they would be kidnapped and brought to the regimental command as a new recruit. For such reason, the Crown Foot Guard, consisting for the most part of people chosen at random but ready for any adventure and, in addition, having behind them the experience of constant hand-to-hand combat at the Crown Tribunals, Radom Commissions, and Warsaw assemblies with all sorts of rowdies, ruffians, and other troublemakers, had the reputation of being the most effective of soldiers. No one could put down a dust-up, riot, or bloody conflict as quickly as the guardsmen. By the same token no other soldier was as quick as a guardsman to pick a quarrel. They constantly hung about taverns and other watering places looking for someone to start a fight with, in order to beat him to a pulp, without regard for later possible consequences, including regimental punishment.

They made the greatest sport of the king's royal guard, which was a Saxon horse guard composed of men who were fair of face and of nearly gigantic proportions. The foot guardsmen sought out the royal guardsmen as a hunter seeks out his prey, and whenever they caught up with a group they regularly cut them to shreds, especially about the face, nicking their noses and cheeks and slicing the ears of these pretty folk, for no particular reason other than to brag about how the little men had beaten the bigger ones. The king complained mightily about the treatment of his guardsmen to the officers and general of the foot guard, observing that there was no point in his maintaining a regiment whose chief purpose seemed to consist of doing him mischief. Several times he called staff officers and the general himself on the carpet in this regard, presenting to them examples of the harm done and demanding that they exert more effective control over them. The general and his officers did whatever they could; they mercilessly punished whatever perpetrators they could identify, and when nothing else seemed to work, they deprived the guards-

men of their broadswords which, up until that time, all soldiers carried with them, whether on duty or off. However, the custom at the time was for soldiers not to mount their bayonets on their rifles other than when on duty or on parade. At other times they carried them at their side next to their swords. And so, when the guardsmen had their swords taken away, they went around with wooden staffs and, whenever it came time to have a fight with the Royal Horse Guards, they would mount their bayonets on these staffs and do as much or even more damage to the faces of the royal guards than they had with their swords. The members of the Royal Horse Guards, being heavy set and no experts with a saber nor with any training in fencing, would thrash about at the foot guards as if with flails, allowing the guardsmen to undercut them smoothly and quickly, leave their mark on them, and get away.

At last, when August saw that every time the Royal Horse Guard was mustered, more and more of the men had their faces decorated with curls, he sent them back to Saxony and replaced them with a regiment of so-called fusiliers, lads just as stout as the horse guards had been, but not as good-looking (for he ceased caring so much about that), for whom the foot guards no longer had such an appetite.

They were just as skilled at a shot as they were with a sword. As often as the duty fell to them, they acquitted themselves with distinction, whether in a single volley or in rapid succession, and they often had such occasion at the funerals of soldiers and officers, whether from their own regiment or from others, when death had taken a person far away from his own command, for reason of his being on duty in Warsaw, Lublin, Piotrków, or Radom. At a simple soldier's funeral soldiers fired twelve shots, while an under-officer merited twenty-four, an ensign or lieutenant thirty-six, a captain the entire company, and a staff officer the entire regiment, although those on duty, in hospital, or under detention were exempted. At the cemetery, after the body was lowered into the grave, the deceased received three salvos, following which everyone kneeled with the commanding officer and, if the deceased was a Catholic, a prayer was said for the soul of the departed. If he were a dissident, he received no prayer, for dissidents consider prayers for the dead to be unnecessary. But the ceremony of gunfire was accorded to all, of whatever faith, in lieu of their final soldier's pay. However, in case a person had perished in a brawl or duel, he had no

right either to a rifle salute or to an elaborate funeral. The honor of firing a salute at a funeral turned from a being custom into a duty, although foreign officers received no such honor, unless those burying them interceded on their behalf. Other occasions for concentrated fire were various kinds of celebrations among assorted lords, which have been described elsewhere.

The Corpus Christi procession was sometimes, although not always, honored with a guardsmen's rifle salute, whether all at once or in rapid succession, or both one and the other, when the king was in Warsaw and wanted to test the skill with a rifle of these masters of the sword. These tests were conducted on the grounds of the Saxon palace after the missionary brethren's procession had left. I once witnessed such a display delivered in three separate volleys during the entrance of the Turkish ambassador for an audience with the king. As soon as the cavalcade passed, the guardsmen's squadrons, which were drawn up on either side of the street, began to ply a continuous fire. I do not know whether this was to honor the consul or to display to the Turks the skill of the Polish soldier. It must have been either one or the other, or possibly both.

The foot guardsmen also had greater talent than other regiments in perpetrating deceptions, swindles, and petty theft. One would have to write a book in order to cover everything in detail. Here it will be sufficient to mention only a few out of the many tricks to which even the most cautious person entering into some kind of deal with a guardsman was susceptible. More than one person ended up with a handful of flax or rags of the same consistency as a fancy belt they had just been shown; or instead of a watch, a turnip; or instead of an ermine fur a sheep's tail; or instead of an embossed saber a piece of bent wood; and other such things. Whenever a group of them gathered around a cart loaded with butter, cheese, barnyard fowl, or other sorts of foodstuff, the seller's goods never added up later, even though he never spotted the theft. Others fashioned little lead disks, in all respects similar to coins currently in circulation, or to old Polish coins minted at the time of Jan Kazimierz,²¹⁶ and for that reason badly worn, whose smoothness and slipperiness the lead disks imitated. With such "coins" the guardsmen would run at dusk about the streets of War-

216 Jan II Kazimierz Wasa (1609–1672, ruled 1648–1668), his reign usually being considered to have been disastrous.

saw selling various pledges won at cards or borrowed from somewhere at a cheap price, which they enticed passers-by to purchase. They would then pocket the money received for the item and, taking an equivalent amount of lead coins in their fist, they would run after the buyer and, pretending to be stricken with remorse for having taken money for a stolen item and for fear of the punishment they faced because of it, they would ask for the object they had sold back, but instead of the money they had received for it they would hand over the lead coins. Invariably the purchaser of such an item, after having been tracked down by a conscience-stricken guardsman, taking the charlatan's remorseful face for genuine, handed the item over, satisfied that he had emerged (as he thought in the darkness) without getting himself mixed up in the guardsman's intrigues and transgressions. Of course, once he came into the light, or looked next day into his purse out of necessity, he noticed that he had been fooled. This trick didn't last for long, however, because news of it quickly spread throughout Warsaw.

The guardsmen got more mileage out of the cups and ball trick, which looked like this. A guardsman would take three wooden cups, the size of half a pharmacist's jar, put them upside down on a tiny table set up somewhere on the street, and shift them back and forth so cleverly, from right to left, from the middle to one side or the other, and so on, shifting these little cups constantly back and forth, while beneath the cups was a single small wax ball, sometimes under this cup, and sometimes under that one. Whoever could guess which cup held the ball won. Whoever didn't, lost. But the guardsmen had such dexterity of hand that it was difficult to follow the ball, and under which cup it was located after they had shifted them back and forth, even when sometimes the guardsman intentionally moved the cups around slowly. A player would put his money down and the guardsman would straightaway start shifting the cups around, and if the person playing cups and ball did not find the ball under the cup he pointed out when it was raised, the guardsman instantly revealed it beneath another cup and scooped up the wagered money from the table. So as not to lack for customers, now and again he would allow one or another player to win, but more often he would trick every single person he played, for he knew how to quickly whisk the ball out from under a cup to between his fingers and, when it was not found under the cup pointed out by the player, he would slip it under another one unobserved.

They often hired people to come along with them who would win at cups and ball, so as to encourage others by the example of their good fortune to try their own luck. In this way the guardsmen tricked many people, especially country simpletons and women who, after selling some calf or other village product, were driven to play by the desire of turning their profit into an even greater one. Not to mention Warsaw cooks and other servants of burgher or noble households, carrying money with which they had been sent out on household errands.

As a result, complaints frequently arose, and the game was strictly forbidden, but under the less than watchful eyes of the authorities it did not die off immediately, for the guardsmen long had a means of evading an officer's eye by placing comrades in the vicinity, who would alert them to the presence of an officer, from whatever direction he might come. The person keeping a lookout would stand close by, and at the sight of an officer he would say to the guardsman, "Oh come on, brother, give it up, what do you need to do this for?" Upon hearing the secret code, the guardsman would wrap up his cups and table and take refuge in a nearby apartment or home and, once the officer had passed, he would resume play. It got to the point that an edict went out to the effect that any person had the authority to dislodge such gamers from in front of their buildings, to report them to any nearby guardhouse for them to be picked up or, if they could overpower the guardsman, to relieve him of his money and gaming equipment. Only after the institution of such measures did the described play come to an end.

On New Year's Day, drummers from the Crown Foot Guard would make the rounds of wealthy lords, whether of knightly or priestly state, making a racket with the beat of their drums and the shrillness of their pipes, in that way greeting the New Year and receiving ducats in return, the accumulation of which augured for them the beginning of a lucky year to come.

Those without the ingenuity or inclination for swindling sought other means at work for better living conditions than they could afford with their meager soldier's pay, which came to nine and a half copper groschen per day, out of which a soldier had to buy polish for his leather ammunition bag and wax for his mustache, gaiters, and shoes; and if anyone should tear his uniform or shoes, or if anything in his equipment should become

broken, then the captain would take measure of the damage and subtract it from his pay, without which it was difficult for a soldier to manage, as he was issued a uniform once every two years, along with two shirts, two shoes and gaiters and a couple of replacement soles, which was never enough to last for two years, whether one was engaged in honest work or otherwise.

A second source of income was to hire oneself out as a substitute for others in doing guard duty, namely, for those who, being tradesmen, never did any duty but only wore the foot guard's uniform for protection. Such men were obliged to present themselves to their captain in their uniform once a month, request from him a month's leave, and to show up and stand in rank for any mustering of the entire regiment or to march in any major parade. For all other duties he could hire himself a stand-in or, in case he lacked one, the captain would make do without him, but the tradesman had to pay the captain double the rate. In addition, none of the tradesmen who were guardsmen in uniform ever took home any pay or recompense for equipment. All of that stayed in the captain's pocket.





THE COMPANY CIRCLE

The towarzysz (comrade, or companion-at-arms) was a junior officer serving in the infantry or, especially, the cavalry under the "Polish, or National-style" army, from the sixteenth century up until the end of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795. Generally speaking, this was a nobleman contracted and paid to serve for a period of five years, along with a larger or smaller number of "enlisted men," whom he provisioned and armed out of his own pocket, as specified in his contract.

The cavalry was divided into the hussars, heavy cavalry, and the ulans, or medium-to-light cavalry, arranged into companies under a company banner, or chorągiew. Beneath this were the light cavalry, or dragoons. The company was in the charge of a rotmistrz (captain or company commander), with a porucznik, or lieutenant, as second in command. Next in rank was the chorąży, ensign or standard-bearer. In the absence of any of the foregoing, command fell to the namiestnik, something like an adjutant, or chief administrative officer. As Kitowicz narrates in this piece, the members of a cavalry company had a romantic view of themselves as knights of the realm. Mostly idle of military activity during August III's reign, they took out their aggressive impulses vicariously, by endeavoring to outdo their fellow companions-at-arms in showy displays of horse, weaponry, and carriage. Until tipped off by the last sentence of this piece, the reader might not realize that this excellently structured description of the yearly gathering, or "circle," of the members of a cavalry unit brims from beginning to end with tongue-in-cheek irony and sarcasm.

O.E.S.

Each year every hussar or armored company would hold a "circle," or a meeting convened to discuss matters pertaining either to the company itself or to matters of a more personal nature. The companions-at-arms who wanted to attend such a circle did so, while those

who did not want to attend sent deputies in their place. Members of the company who decided to attend the circle would accouter themselves in as showy a fashion as possible, according to their ability. The poorest among them would show up at the circle riding in a *karabon* (caravan), which was a carriage drawn by four horses upholstered in dark leather, driven by a liveried coachman.

The companion would sit in his carriage dressed in galligaskins²¹⁷ with a cartridge belt around his waist. Nearly everyone would be wearing a crucifix on his breast or a picture of the Virgin Mary on a silk ribbon around his neck,²¹⁸ with the two long ends of the band hanging out in back over the shoulders. His sabre would be mounted next to him on one side of his conveyance, and on the other side would be a sidearm or flintlock rifle. A lance would be attached alongside the carriage, with its head facing backward, sticking out about two cubits beyond the rear wheel. Next to it would be the *kitaika*, or company banner, wrapped around its staff to keep it from getting soiled. Behind the carriage on a separate horse rode an outrider, the soldier's retainer, dressed in livery to match that of the driver, also in galligaskins and cartridge belt and, like his master, wearing a crucifix or image. He would be leading the lord's battle horse, saddled and with an array of pistols in holsters, the whole thing being covered in red, green, or orange Turkish taffeta. The head and neck of the horse would be covered with a head-cloth made of simple white fabric, over which varicolored scraps of other fabric would be appliqued, arranged in the shapes of flowers, birds, and other figures. The covering had four holes in it, bordered with red or green tape or piping, for the eyes and the ears to peep or poke out of. Behind the carriage a greyhound or pointer would trot, either on a leash or running free.

Wealthier companions-at-arms²¹⁹ came with a larger number of horses and retainers. Some citizens serving in the company were so wealthy, especially young lords, that they were able to parade to the circle in a six-horse carriage, followed by one and another carriage with several horses in tow, and as many as a dozen or more serving staff, including cooks,

²¹⁷ *galligaskins*: loose-fitting trousers worn tucked into one's boots.

²¹⁸ On the Virgin Mary, see also note 67.

²¹⁹ The word used here is *towarzysz* (comrade); see also the chapter "The Company Deputation for Tax Collection."

haiduks, and paiuks, riding in wagons packed to the brim with table settings and food, barrels of wine, and casks of Gdańsk vodka.²²⁰ For this was how the special vanity of the Polish knightly class expressed itself, by showing off to others in the company, having no other field for activity in a time of burgeoning peace.²²¹

Having drawn up to company headquarters, the cavalier would come to a halt surrounded by all his finery in front of the office of the adjutant who, walking out to greet him, would receive him as a guest. After an initial exchange of compliments, the cavalier would request of the adjutant a place to make quarter. The adjutant would then assign lodgings to him according to the duties of his office, although in fact they had already been arranged and rented by the cavalier's people, sent there in advance.

When the appointed day for the circle arrived, all those present reported to the lieutenant or standard-bearer or, if one were present and no higher officer were present, to the adjutant. There, taking seats around a table in order of seniority, the presiding officer would deliver a speech of welcome to the gathered companions, in which first and foremost he mentioned their sacrifice of life and fortune for the protection of the fatherland, after which he praised the Lord Almighty, for his fatherly endeavors in the interest of the common good. Next out of the mouth of the orator flowed praise for the person of the commander-in-chief of the army,²²² leader and protector of soldiers' blood, that fearless and invincible warrior, successor and veritable likeness of all the valiant Polish heroes—the Żółkiewskis, Koryckis, Chodkiewicz, Czarneckis, and Sobieskis²²³ who had gone before—ending up by directing praise in turn to the company commander, the lieutenant, standard-bearer, adjutant, and to the entire assembly of worthy colleagues, whether in attendance or absent.

After the speech was over, if any new recruit was to ride beneath the

220 *gdańska wódka* (Gdańsk vodka): sold today in the United States as Goldwasser, an often slightly sweetened vodka containing flakes of gold, produced in Gdańsk since 1598.

221 Given the Seven-Year's War (1756–1763), and the impending partitions of Poland among the great powers of Europe, Kitowicz has a strange conception of a time of "burgeoning peace."

222 In Polish, the *wojewoda*.

223 Famous military leaders of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the preceding century: Stanisław Żółkiewski (1547–1620); Samuel Murza Korycki (d. 1704); Jan Karol Chodkiewicz (1560–1621); Stefan Czarniecki (1599–1665); Jan Sobieski (1629–1696). The last, as king Jan III Sobieski, proclaimed by the Pope as the Savior of Christendom after his victory over the Turks at Vienna in 1683, ruled Poland in 1674–1696.

company banner, having purchased for himself entry into it (for there was hardly any other means of joining these divisions, unless one were heavily promoted or had rendered the commander, lieutenant, or standard-bearer some great service), two younger companions would be sent out to fetch him. Summoning him in the name of the entire company, they would invite him to join the circle. The recruit, who would have been waiting for this moment in all readiness, would sally forth in full military regalia, followed by one or more retainers, if he were to serve not alone but accompanied by an ample retinue of enlisted men. The enlisted men stood at parade rest while the company banner was raised, beneath which stood the new companion-at-arms. Turning on his horse, he would wave the banner in one direction and the other, following which ceremony he would dismount, and his horse, along with the enlisted men, would be led away by the stable-master. The newly fledged companion, now surrounded by the rest of his comrades, would be taken amidst much well-wishing to the meeting hall where, after giving due obeisance to as many officers and colleagues as were present, he would commend himself to the gathering with a speech, either composed for the occasion or extemporized on the spot, on the theme of brotherly friendship. Then he would betake himself to a nearby home or to some other hall, if such were available, to doff whatever armor he was wearing, or, if he was not wearing any, he would merely change out of his galligaskins and cartridge belt, return to the company, and take his place at the table as last in rank.

Thereupon followed the military, or rather the company, council, at which the previous year's adjutant presented the money collected for the company from the taxes owed it, handed over the promissory notes from the villages and towns that had not yet paid their tax, and gave an account of the expenses, if any were still on the books, from the previous year's circle. The remainder of the cash was handed over to the present adjutant, who paid each companion his due, less any money owed for room and board or for that of his retainers, or for any other accrued expenses for the repair of equipment or a fallen horse. Money owing to those comrades who had not attended the circle would be sent along through their friends, if they so requested.

After the bills had been taken care of, a new adjutant was elected, who was chosen by running through the register from top to bottom. However,

given how many men were not present or who did not care to undertake the office, the function often fell to the youngest, as long as he had behind him the strong backing of, or enjoyed special favor among, his comrades. As a final act they chose a plenipotentiary for the Radom Commission,²²⁴ as well as two residents to assist the company commander; either that or they reconfirmed the old ones. Three days were allocated for such business, after which no business took place. Nevertheless, the convention sometimes lasted for a week or two afterwards, until the wealthy had consumed everything they had brought with them, and the less wealthy had partaken of their share of food and drink. Throughout the entire time of the convention the enlisted men kept watch and staffed the guardhouse. Whenever their masters brought out goblets to drink to the health of the king, hetmans, or officers, they would fire off a volley, for which service they would receive from the more generous companions money for a keg or two of beer, or a case or two of vodka. With this money, after they had received it, and after the campaign was concluded and the circle had disbanded, they would hold a feast or, if they preferred, they would share the money amongst themselves.

After all, almost every enlisted man had a wife and children along with him wherever the company headquarters was stationed, and it was always stationed in the same place, so that an enlisted man, after residing on the spot for a year or two, would try to get himself a wife and property as expeditiously as possible, having assured himself that he would not be knocking about the world so much, and that even should he be called upon to do so, and go after some marauders somewhere or other, it would soon be over and he would return to his home nest. And so, when more enlisted men were married than were not, they would more often prefer to get money to hand rather than spend it on food and drink.

For as long as the circle lasted, one could tell that it was company headquarters. However, once the company had disbanded, the enlisted men took off their uniforms and returned to their homes and farms. No watch stood outside the deputy's residence, just a single enlisted man, taking turns with others. The drummer served as a household servant, or sometimes as a cook in the adjutant's house. The buglers, however, of

224 See the chapter "The Radom Commission."

whom there were two in each company, had the duty of sounding reveille each morning, and signaling close of day each evening before the adjutant's quarters, and also to bugle a flourish whenever the adjutant had guests. Beyond this, there was no sign of the company's existence for an entire year. Each member slumbered in his own place of abode, and the adjutant strolled back and forth about village and town, carrying a cudgel²²⁵ in his hand and a cigarette holder in his mouth, maintaining law and order.



²²⁵ An *obuch* was a stout walking stick, often fitted with an ax-blade which could be used either for strolling, chopping wood or as a weapon, rather like the *ciupaga*, or alpenstock, carried by highlanders in the Carpathian mountains.



THE COMPANY DEPUTATION
FOR TAX COLLECTION

A brief description of the extortionary activities of the “companion-at-arms” tasked by a cavalry company with gathering what amounted to protection money from villages and towns for national defense. Besides holding villages up for ransom, as it were—even if this was the legally prescribed way for the cavalry to support itself—the company tax collector does not hesitate to chisel his own company by means of his intricate financial manipulations.

O.E.S.

It was not considered proper for the companion-at-arms deputized by the company to collect taxes to take along with him more people or horses than exactly as many as were required. On such an expedition he traveled from village to village or town to town, wherever taxes were owed to the company. His duty was to ride up to two miles per day,²²⁶ and after three days of such travel to rest for three days in a suitable location. However, no deputy ever obeyed this regulation, but instead took three-day trips everywhere, just as he pleased, even if he had to travel no more than half a mile from one village to the next. As soon as he had entered a village, he announced himself to the local manor or, in case there was no manor, to the peasant elder in the village. If he arrived in a town, he announced himself to the mayor.

Sometimes he stayed at the manor, sometimes in a peasant cottage, wherever he was given quarters, adapting himself in this way to the will of the local authorities, as if honoring the law, which prescribes moderation.

²²⁶ In the eighteenth century, the length of a Polish *mila* was 7146 meters, or 23,444.88 feet, or 4.44 English miles.

As to other comforts, he had no mind to obey the law too closely. He ordered as much oats and hay as his horses could possibly munch down on the spot and during their travel on to the next station he had staked out for himself, and as many chickens, geese, capons, eggs, and as much butter, cheese, bread, flour, kasha, and pork fat as those in his retinue could possibly use or could fit into his wagon. He also remembered to make sure, wherever he saw a well-run manor, that his traveling case was filled with the best in vodka, along with a barrel of *aqua vitae*²²⁷ for his retinue to drink along the way, as in some places this beverage was not to one's taste. He did not carry beer along with him, as that beverage does not travel well, but instead drank of it as much as he liked on the spot, along with his retinue. And whatever he drank, the community recompensed the tavern-keeper for it.

Wherever he tarried for his three-day sojourn, he stayed for the duration, even should the tax be handed over on the first day, for which he gave a signed receipt, and took another one from the local authorities, affirming that he had treated the citizenry fairly and had done them no harm. For it could happen at times that a lad or estate manager would get it across the back with a cane from his honor the deputy, or with a club from the deputy's assistant or other retainer, when either the fodder for the horses was too meager or not of first quality, or when the kitchen provender suffered from the same defects. Most disputes were about money. Since silver coinage in the country was in such short supply, and what gold they offered was often badly worn, and could have been minted as early as the reign of Jan Kazimierz,²²⁸ the deputy did not like to receive payment in gold but rather demanded silver coin, but only the best, and for this reason it often came to a quarrel. A stubborn property owner would send his contribution to a court notary and deposit it there, along with a complaint against the deputy, charging him with extortion. The deputy for his part would stay on in the village, making a nuisance of himself, until the complaint made its way back from the notary's office along with a summons for him to appear before the court. After picking up the summons, usually tacked onto his wagon, he would leave the village, tickling people with his staff and distributing favors with his club.

²²⁷ *aqua vitae*: seemingly a weaker distillation of vodka.

²²⁸ On King Jan Kazimierz, see note 216.

And since among people fortune and misfortune freely alternate, it could happen that Mr. Deputy himself would be driven out of a village in disgrace, with bruises and wounds to go along with it, as the result of which occurrence the matter would be brought before the Radom Commission by either one side or the other, with the outcome dependent on the deviousness, knowledge of the law, and the power of the winning side. Whoever wished to avoid a quarrel received the deputy with open arms and struck an agreement as to the exchange rate among the various currencies,²²⁹ for example counting a minted sixpence, which was the equivalent of twelve groschen and two schillings, as equal to eleven or twelve groschen and calling it even; or by agreeing to count a red złoty, worth eighteen ordinary złotych, as the equivalent of sixteen or seventeen. After due consideration, the money deposited with the court would sometimes be accepted by the deputy. At other times, depending on what he thought his chances were at winning or losing on appeal, he would declare the village to be in arrears.

Having loaded his wagon down with fodder and food, the deputy for tax collection would be of no mind to spend his three-day stay without emptying the wagon down to the bottom, unless in a village to which he came to extract the tax he would agree in advance to accept the money for his three-day's visit, which would be paid him right away, together with the tax owed, and then immediately leave. For this was the only way of getting rid of the unwanted guest: to pay the tax as quickly as possible, to pay him the three-day's allowance or, instead of money, to cheerfully load his empty wagon with fodder and food, to fill his empty throat and wine skins and, feigning poverty, to escort him to another nearby village, whether royal or ecclesiastical.

In this way, the deputy reaped a three-fold profit: first, by taking in money at a lower cost and handing it over to the company according to the official exchange rate; secondly, by collecting money to pay for his three-day visits; thirdly, by accepting the talar in salary that the company paid him for each horse he used. A fourth source of profit was not always evident, in that the same sixpence accepted at the rate of eleven or

229 One has to take Kitowicz's monetary reckonings on faith, but he seems to know what he is talking about. Regarding coinage of eighteenth-century Poland, see under *złoty* in the Glossary of Terms.

twelve groschen could be exchanged among merchants and Jews back into twelve groschen and two schillings; or he could buy a red złoty for sixteen or seventeen regular złotys (or sometimes, if it were nicked, even less), and hand it over to the company as if worth eighteen. In sum, from all these transactions, the deputy could come out three or four thousand ahead, not even counting the fact that for a quarter of the year or even more he paid nothing out of his pocket for his own upkeep, nor for that of his horses and men.





THE MARCH OF THE HUSSAR AND ARMORED REGIMENTS

The reader of this piece is bound to be struck by how armor more often associated with the middle ages was still being used by the Polish military in the middle of the eighteenth century—until he finds out that the storied heavily armored “winged cavalry” of myth and legend, not to mention of romantic portraiture and historical fiction and film, even though it was officially maintained as a fighting force, was hardly ever used other than ceremonially: its continued existence seemed to flatter the vanity of the king (and of the men who served in it). Established by King Stefan Bathory in the sixteenth century, in its time this heavily armed lightning strike force was among the most respected in all of Europe. By the eighteenth century, heavy armored cavalry—both as to equipment and tactics—had become largely obsolete and was being replaced with units of lighter and more maneuverable cavalry.

From the way Kitowicz describes the hussars, they were almost a self-parody, an example of function having finally given over to pure form. The author says it all in his brief first paragraph in which he lists one of their main functions as assisting at the consecration of holy images. Later, we see how, after their first couple of miles or so of marching, they get off their horses and transfer to more comfortable seats in coaches and carriages. They almost never become engaged in actual military combat, certainly not in the antiquated regalia they liked to wear (although toward the end Kitowicz does discuss their forays against the haidamaks), but they mostly enjoyed parading in their outmoded equipment recalling the glory days of their ancestors.

A distinction, the significance of which can easily escape one (it seems to consist mainly of choices as to saddlery, uniform, armor, and weaponry), is one made here between the hussars and the armored cavalry. Both are kinds of heavy cavalry. West European hussars, by contrast, are usually light cavalry.

Kitowicz almost passes over in silence the famous "wings" curling over the hussar's head; one gets the impression that they were not used much. Supposedly they were originally developed to thwart lassoes used by the Turks to unhorse a rider. Kitowicz is much more taken with the camel-hair capes worn by the soldiers of the armored regiments. For more on the towarzyszy (comrade, or companion-at-arms), see the introduction to "The Company Circle."

O.E.S.

The hussars were not employed for expeditions other than to accompany some lord's entry into his starostwo²³⁰ or voivodeship, or to attend his funeral. For that reason, the hussar and armored companies were sometimes called burial soldiers. Both one and the other also assisted at the dedication of miracle-working images.

When a hussar company ventured out on such an "expedition," it was followed by an enormous train of two- and four-horse carriages and three times as many people as comprised the entire division. First came wagons loaded with armament, which neither the companions-at-arms nor the rank-and-file soldiers wore as they marched—for one reason so as to ride more comfortably on the horse, and for another for fear of rain, after which the armor would need to be cleaned and polished, lest it rust. After the wagons followed the baggage cars of his honor the adjutant and of the companions of the company, bearing clothing more parade-worthy than their riding clothes, along with harnesses, silver-studded saddles, bed-linen, canopies, tapestries, carpets, tents, *treptuchs* (which are mobile feeding bags on wheels out of which horses are fed when they come to a stop in the field), people-blankets, saddle-blankets, horse-blankets, skillets, pans, bowls, tin plates, copper pots, smoked meats, hams, sausages, chops, cold-cuts, bags of noodles, loaves of bread, fodder—in short, everything that might be needed for sustenance by man or horse. If a full regiment came to fifty horses, then along with the drivers, grooms, and other serving help, one could reckon on a total of three hundred head of men and five hundred horses. It would have taken a fairly large village to

230 See under *starosta* in the Glossary of Commonly Used Terms.

accommodate it all. Most often it was divided into three parts: first, the companions with their more important wagons; then the enlisted men with their wagons; and finally the rest of the supply train, carrying what was less needed for the road.

Before the company got underway, they were typically preceded by three calls to assemble. In the first call, the deputy sent out letters to all companions asking them to join the regiment, which letters were of two sorts: one, when the directive was addressed to everyone, not excluding anyone from participating in the given operation; and two, when no companion had shown up, begging for at least a few to come in order to preserve the honor of the company. Edict followed edict one upon the other over the course of two weeks, and so the companions, all having been informed by the adjutant, each hastened to join the company, according to the distance he had to travel. Some joined at the place of muster, while others joined it *en marche*, and others only at the place of final destination to which they were marching.

On the day before the company's march was to begin, a junior companion and two enlisted men, along with a few other available people, preceded the march by running about all stations through which the regiment was scheduled to stay in order to arrange for quarters and the means for the early provision of fodder and food which, in military parlance, was called a chessboard, after its similarity to the board on which chess or checkers are played, the squares of which were adapted to the color of dress found on this group of people.

After the chessboard was drawn up, next day the company moved out in this order: first two trumpeters rode back and forth, this way and that, announcing the march; next came a drummer, beating with his sticks on two copper kettledrums hanging from either side of the saddle on its front horn. At a distance of several paces pranced the adjutant on a sprightly steed, carrying an unsheathed sword in his hand, held breast high. After the adjutant came the companions-at-arms in pairs, holding their swords over their shoulders; any unpaired person rode between the two in the last row. Following the companions came the company banner in the care of the most senior companion in the register, and behind the banner marched the enlisted men, holding their rifles with the barrel leaning against the saddle sidewise over the horse's head. After the enlisted men came the

spare horses, and after the saddle-horses stretched the coaches, carriages, and company wagons. When the company rode other than at parade arms, the adjutant held a war hammer or battle hatchet in his hand; the companions-at-arms rode with arms empty; and the enlisted men's rifles rested in stirrups hanging from the right side of the saddle with their barrels pointed backwards.

Having led out the company one or two miles, the adjutant and the companions-at-arms would transfer to coaches and carriages, leaving only a junior officer on his horse to lead the regimental parade; and this is how it stretched out, all the way to its destination, unless the company should happen to pass through a town in which a command of either foreign-style or Polish-style soldiers was stationed, in which case the companions would again mount their horses and ride through it at parade arms which, in soldier's language, was called marching sharp. One must also inform the Reader that when riding at parade arms the banner was unfurled, while at other times it traveled in a protective sheath lest it get soiled.

It was quite something to see a Polish hussar or armored company on display, especially the hussars. I will only note that no other monarch in the world had anything quite as showy as a Polish company of hussars. The horse beneath the commander (in practice always a lieutenant or ensign) was worth a hundred and sometimes as much as two hundred red zlotys. The horse's harness would be Turkish and extravagantly decorated with silver and gold, and studded with precious stones, and the saddle the same. A panache,²³¹ which is a white horse's tail in the fashion of Turkish pashas, would be hung next to the right ear of the horse, placed in a gilded orb set with precious stones. Over the forehead of the horse would be a plume of ostrich feathers or of ingeniously fashioned bristles of various colors, with a silvery-golden crest set with diamonds and precious stones attached to the strap over the horse's forehead. The upper part of the horse's head and its entire neck would be covered by a cap or a net of silver and gold with tassels of the same material, hanging thickly down over both sides of the neck. The rear of the horse would be covered by a silk Turkish caparison embroidered with gold, and festooned with tassels of silver and gold. It covered the entire rear end of the horse and hung down as far as his rear

231 In Polish, *buńczuk*.

fetlocks; or, instead of a Turkish caparison, the horse would be covered by a satin one of similar cut, embroidered with silver and gold, even showier and costlier than the first.

In some quarters, such excess reigned that people allowed the whole kit to be dragged through the mud, although such a damaged element detracted more than it added to the parade, placing right next to a caparison's gold-embroidered floral design something looking like it came from the gutter. The commander wore white steel plate armor, polished to look like silver, gilded on the edges, covering the rider both front and rear as far down as the waist. (N[ota] B[ene]: Some officers had armor made of the overlapping, fish-scale type. Sometimes for greater show these scales were held together by polished gold fastenings or rounded studs. The latter kind of armor was more comfortable, because it could bend, a feature the first kind did not have.) The arms were covered by armplates, which came all the way down over the fingers in the shape of a glove, but leaving the hand free underneath for grasping in the right hand a ready weapon: a silver, enameled, or embossed mace set with stones. Over the shoulders, slung over the left arm and under the right, hung a leopard skin lined with bright red damask or satin, clasped with a gilded stone-studded buckle fastened to two feet of the same beast. With some commanders the place of the buckle would be taken by a single large, costly, shiny stone. A Roman-style casque adorned the head with a row of tall ostrich feathers arranged in the form of a coxcomb, the ends of which tipped down over the rider's brow. With the neck being covered by an iron plate and the cheeks and chin the same, the only bare parts of the body presenting themselves to view were the nose, eyes, and lips, the last covered with a bushy mustache; except that some people also wore a narrow, elongated nosepiece cut to order, one end of which was screwed into the helmet.

Armor was not used from the waist down. Galligaskins, which are large, capacious, and flowing trousers, were worn over the top of the boots and covered the rider from waist to shin. The galligaskins were of wool: of the finest French cloth in the case of the companions-at-arms; for the enlisted men the cloth was of domestic manufacture, called *paklak*. Before uniforms became common, the coats and galligaskins could be of any color, according to individual taste. After uniforms were introduced by the Great Lithuanian Hetman Prince Michał Radziwiłł, for the armored cav-

ally the żupan, cap top, and galligaskins were crimson and the kontusz was navy blue. For the hussars the żupan, cap top, and galligaskins were navy blue and the kontusz was crimson. Only the companions wore kontuszes. Instead of kontuszes the enlisted men wore jackets coming down to the knees, with the sleeves rolled up, and with cuffs, lapels and collars fastened with whitened brass buttons in the manner of German clothing. The outside of the cuffs, lapels, and collar were of the same color as the żupan. The shoulders of the jackets had narrow straps of the same material as the żupan, one end of which was sewn to the żupan, the other end being fastened to it with a button, through which the straps of the bandoleer and cartridge belt ran, so that they might not fall off the shoulder during the course of various turns and twists. At first the companions-at-arms did not have these straps, but with time they introduced silver or gold cords in their place, which ultimately evolved into broad piped tapes with fancy fringes. The kontuszes and jackets were worn only without armor; when the men were armored they left their kontuszes and jackets behind and wore only żupans and galligaskins.

Besides a saber at one's side and pistols in holsters next to the saddle, for both battles and parades the armored and hussar cavalry officers carried spears to which small silk banners were attached, longer for hussars and shorter for the armored cavalry. Most often the banners were red and white, although some companies used banners of the same color as their uniform. The names given to the spear and banner was: for hussars, a lance; for the armored cavalry, a banner; and for the light cavalry, a badge.

In the same way that officers competed with one another to have the finest in horses and saddles, so too did the companions compete among themselves, a difference being that companions did not have panaches or armor differing one from another, nor a different caparison or horse blanket, but all had to be in conformity with one another as to color and style, although as to the quality of the material and workmanship they still did try to outdo one another.

The enlisted hussars used wolf skins instead of leopard skins, slung over their shoulders in the same manner as the companions. Instead of ostrich feathers the rank-and-file hussars had high wooden structures attached to the back reaching from the waist to high over the head and curving back over it, with long feathers stuck in them from one end to the

other. The feathers were of various colors and could also be painted in imitation of laurel or palm leaves, which created a marvelously beautiful sight; however, not all companies used them. In some divisions the rank-and-file simply wore plumes of feathers on their helmets, usually dyed goose-feathers, or, instead of that, they wore a round bronze orb set on a thick iron rod, three inches long. The saddle blankets among the rank-and-file hung down to the horse's knees and covered its entire back. All were of identical color and type, made of ordinary material, accommodated to the color of the enlisted men's uniforms. The enlisted men of all hussar and armored regiments had long before been given uniforms, but the regiments themselves had not yet adopted them.

Among the populace the armored divisions were every bit as much respected as the hussars, and just as many people tried to join them: the same customs, the same soldierly regimen, the same rigor or lack of it could be found in both outfits, for which reason everything that has been written here about the composition, marching, and parading of the hussar companies could serve just as well for the armored cavalry. I will now undertake to describe the ways in which the latter differed.

Instead of armor plate, they used doublets of chain mail coming half-way down the body, with sleeves down to the elbows, fashioned out of tiny flat round, oval, or oblong disks as links, one lying on top of the other, with a small opening at the breast, fastened with ties, through which servants put it on and took it off. Protective armplates ran from elbow to fist, polished to a shine, which wrapped halfway around the lower arm and were tied on leather thongs. The hands themselves were not protected by metal but were covered with thick elk-hide gloves. They wore galligaskins just like the hussars, but on their heads instead of a casque they wore a helmet of mail²³² protecting the lower part of the head, brow, upper back, and cheeks, attached to a circular iron or bronze cap over the very top of the head, crested with a silver or gold knob, according to taste, leaving the eyes, nose, mouth, chin, and front of the neck exposed.

The armored cavalry did not wear either leopard or wolf skins, and instead of a knob on the helmet the armored cavalry officers wore crests of dyed

232 In Polish, *misiurka*.

feathers or bristles set in a stone-studded sleeve. As to the horses, saddles, bridles, panaches, and caparisons the armored cavalry in no way took second place to the hussar regiments. In all military equipment one vied with the other for superiority according to what he could afford. When an armored cavalry officer took up in his left arm a shield encrusted with pearls or precious stones and fixed to his left side a quiver of arrows dyed in various colors, the quiver being just as decorated with pearls and gemstones as the shield was, he even outdid the hussars, for by the time of August III no one much used such armament any longer. Rather they carried it as if ancient symbols of the glorious victories of their forebears over the Turks and Tatars.

Companions of the armored cavalry still sometimes, if not always, used bows and arrows in raids against the haidamaks,²³³ even though firearms had already been in use in Poland for a long time. Arrows were used first of all because an arrow wounds and kills a haidamak silently, without giving any indication as to in which pit or behind which bush his assailant might be hiding. Secondly, in those days the opinion was common among the military that some kind of secret charm existed that could protect a person against lead, and that this charm was possessed by the haidamaks such that they could not be wounded with a lead bullet. However, there is no secret charm against the iron of which an arrowhead is made. I have heard it repeated by many soldiers experienced in fighting them that the haidamaks sweep the bullets off raining down upon them as if they were flakes of snow; that they trap them under their arms or catch them in their hands and throw them back at our men just to mock them. For a lead bullet to fell a haidamak, these story-tellers say, they should be cast on consecrated wheat, or simply have them made of iron, silver, or gold. And that is why gullible soldiers, long after the invention of the rifle, still had a use for the bow and arrow. A third and highly probable reason for using arrows, or rather not arrows but quivers, was that cavalry companions did not yet have established uniforms, so a companion-at-arms wanting to distinguish himself from an ordinary citizen, whether he was on campaign or in public gatherings, fixed to his side a quiver, since a saber, which is common to everyone, indicates only that a person is a nobleman,

233 See the chapter "The *Sich* and the *Haidamaks*."

not that he is a soldier. To wear heavy armor or armament outside professional service would have been both inappropriate and uncomfortable; and, in any case, the rank-and-file armored cavalry wore the same kind of armor as the companions, even if it wasn't as decorative.

The image of a company standing all arrayed in armor seen from afar gave the impression of heavy rain. Such was the effect of the empty spaces between the disks and links of chain mail that the dark spots among the polished disks and links at a distance looked like drops of thickly falling rain.

Halfway through August III's reign the armored divisions were armored in name only, for they cast off their armor. By the end of his reign there were no more than four divisions in the Crown Kingdom that used armor, its place being taken by breastplates over the front of the rider and a casque on the head instead of the chain-mail helmet and armplates. This change took place because the chain-mail doublets both cost a lot and because they quickly became tarnished and required constant cleaning. Also, they were more easily penetrated by a musket ball than a metal plate against which, as long as it was polished smooth, a musket ball would simply glance off.

Among the decorative costumes occupying a prominent place was the cape,²³⁴ its cut resembling that of a priest's cassock but somewhat shorter, made of felted goat or camel hair. It was shaggy on the outside and smooth underneath and came in one of three colors: gray, white, or black. A cape made in the Crimea was the most valued, the best of which could cost up to forty red zlotys even without being lined. For more serious occasions it was usually black and lined with fine light-blue or bright red satin, or possibly crimson, richly sewn with gold piping forming stripes across the satin. A commander placed such a cape around his shoulders and tied it with a thick gold cord under his chin so that two large tassels fell down across his breast. The right side of the cape was worn somewhat askew so that the satin showed, which, when reflected against one's armor or chain mail, made a wonderfully pretty sight. And since so many companions could be found who were sufficiently wealthy that it was no difficulty for them to own such a garment, in order to distinguish the officers from the

²³⁴ The word used is *burka*.

rest, no regular companion wore one to a parade. The hussar officers likewise did not wear them, since that place was already taken by the leopard skins described above. Less costly capes from the Crimea, or especially cheap ones from Kulików,²³⁵ were worn by all Polish-style military men, but only while traveling and in camp. They were lighter than fur, stood up better against bad weather, and protected better against a sword-slash than a lighter garment. And if it should ever come to spending the night in the field, as sometimes happened when chasing after the haidamaks, they could stretch it out on sticks and use it as a tent.



235 A town near Lviv in present-day Ukraine.



FOREIGN-STYLE REGIMENTS

One of several chapters detailing the life of different military units, the present one describes the part of the army organized according to the foreign, i.e., German or Swedish model. National-style units consisted of light, medium, and heavy cavalry, in addition to several ethnically inspired cavalry units.

The creation of “foreign-style” troops was an attempt to modernize Polish military formations; it lasted from the early seventeenth through the end of the eighteenth century. Whereas the national-style army was organized around the “banner,” or company (see “The Company Circle”), the organizational unit of the foreign-style army was the regiment, as Kitowicz describes here. Foreign-style troops, whose officerial ranks other than general were open to noblemen and non-noblemen alike, dressed in European-style uniforms, were trained in European-style weaponry and tactics and, by reputation, had better discipline than Polish-style units, while carrying less prestige, to the extent that foreign-style officers were not permitted to command members of the national-style army, unless they also had a commission there.

After a rather hum-drum recounting of the numbers, ranks, and formations of the foreign-style regiments, Kitowicz introduces the ironically depicted figure of the inspector-general, whom he uses as a surrogate for himself in order to expose the pitiable state of the Polish military in the eighteenth century: under-funded, under-trained, over-saturated with officers, and shockingly venal, in that sham officer’s ranks were for sale all the way up through and including general who, upon receiving the rank, became a “general of an empty regiment.”

O.E.S.

Foreign-style regiments were elements of the Polish army that used the uniform, language, and protocol of the German army. They consisted of infantry, cavalry, and artillery detachments. In the Crown army there were ...²³⁶ cavalry regiments, ... infantry regiments, and two artillery regiments, one consisting of cannoneers, practiced in the art of firing off artillery pieces, signal flares, and other kinds of fireworks, while the other protected and guarded the cannoneers during military engagements. The first regiment, of cannoneers, wore green uniforms with red lapels and waistcoats and a cap pinned with two bronze crossed cannons instead of a ribbon cockade; when on guard duty they carried a rifle just like other soldiers. The other regiment wore outer red uniforms and lapels with green waistcoats and trousers, with a white cockade sewn to the cap.

Lithuania counted ... cavalry regiments, ... infantry regiments and, just like in the Crown, two artillery regiments.

Except for the just-mentioned artillery regiments, all foot and horse regiments in both the Crown and Lithuania wore red outer uniforms but differed from one another as to their waistcoats, lapels, and breeches, which varied with each regiment: they could be yellow, navy blue, sky blue, green, beige, black, or white. If they did not have a different color of trousers, then they differed by virtue of their buttons, hats, and trim, which the Crown and Lithuanian guard had, but the other field regiments did not.

Because the regiment of General Golcz, like the other regiments, had red uniforms but in his case with white lapels, waistcoats, and breeches, these men were jocularly referred to as the “white lobsters.”

A regiment of the Crown Horse Guard numbered five hundred rank and file soldiers plus officers, a single company consisting of fifty soldiers. Other horse regiments had only one hundred eighty enlisted men, which comes to six battalions or companies, with thirty soldiers in a single company, for which reason there was an over-abundance of officers, but never of soldiers.

A Crown Guard infantry regiment numbered ten companies of a hundred men each, adding up to a thousand men for the entire regiment. More or less halfway through August III's reign ten regiments were turned into

²³⁶ The number of cavalry and infantry regiments in both the Crown and Lithuania is not filled in.

twenty by dividing them in half so that there would be more positions into which the nobility could be promoted. No thought was given to strengthening the national fighting forces, only to multiplying honors and benefits for the nobility. In the foreign-style regiments, access to all officerial ranks short of actual general (who, in soldier's parlance, was called chief) was open to non-nobility. The rank of general was granted only to native-born Polish nobility, and then only to those having rendered the greatest service to the court or having the strong support of other lords.

All ranks in the regiments of the guard and, in all other regiments, only the rank of general was appointed by royal authority. In the other regiments, vacant ranks, beginning from colonel all the way down to the last ensign, were filled by the great hetmans. Lower-level officers in all regiments were appointed by the generals (i.e., the chiefs), with no input from either king or hetman.

Besides officers serving in regiments in actual military service, Poland had any number of titular major-generals and adjutant-generals serving His Royal Majesty, the Great Crown Hetman, the Field Hetman, the Crown, Lithuania, colonels in the Crown Army, colonels in the army of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, etc., etc.

Even those who were in actual service strove to attain a higher rank than the one in which they served; and so an ensign, having the regimental rank and drawing the pay of an ensign, angled for promotion to lieutenant, lieutenant to captain, captain to major, major to lieutenant colonel, lieutenant colonel to colonel, and colonel to general; for which reason one could find as many as three generals in a single regiment. For example, the first general would be appointed by the king or the hetman, the second would be the lieutenant-general in command, and the third would be a major-general in title, but in actuality a colonel. Of lower-ranking officers there was practically no end, for one could find among them such who, in actual service, were only subalterns or sergeants but who, for reason of family connections, were decorated with the rank of ensign. It got to where, in view of the multitude of officers, the saying arose: "Two captains for every dragoon."

Besides regimental uniforms there was a personal uniform, signifying all by itself a major-general, and it was of a single bright poppy-red color throughout, with the lapels and waistcoat copiously stitched with gold

pipings. An adjutant-general's uniform was white on the outside with a red waistcoat and breeches. Some adjutants decorated their outer uniform with gold piping, while others decorated only the waistcoat, and some did not use piping at all other than for gold lining around the button-holes, which framed gilded pot-metal buttons. On their head they wore a black hat, sometimes trimmed, and sometimes not, but with a white cockade. They sometimes added to the black hat a plume of white ostrich feathers, arranged in a triangle, following the shape of the hat.

Uniforms like this were worn primarily by major-generals and adjutant-generals who belonged to no regiment, or who wore the uniform even while being in service to one. For major-generals were of two kinds, one having received the rank through promotion, and the other not. A promoted general enjoyed all military honors due a general's rank. If he should be stationed to a regular or a foreign-style regiment, a guard would be assigned to his quarters and he would be sent the password issued each day by the regimental commander; any lower officer, even if in active service, yielded place to him. He would sometimes sit in the military criminal courts and, when a military council or committee was convened, they would make use of promoted generals. Such honors were not accorded to any officer, even an actually serving general, by the hussars or armored cavalry, who considered themselves superior to the soldiers of foreign-style regiments, other than for a general who was also a captain of some more serious body, as has been mentioned earlier.

Generals not promoted out of the ranks enjoyed none of these privileges; their entire dignity consisted in being able to wear the uniform and to call themselves generals, a rank no one could dispute as long as they had the papers to prove it. There were many of them who had no other talent than that given them by their tailor and haberdasher, that is, by their uniform and *porte-épée* (sword-holder). This career path was followed by many wealthy young men with no record of service or pull at court or with any wealthy magnate, who nevertheless wanted to shine above their peers in order the more easily to wangle their way into noble palaces and royal chambers, balls, assemblies, the opera, and the theater for free. Sometimes this path was also followed by persons of maturity, who had once served as lower-level officers in a foreign army, people full of themselves: cardsharps, pettifoggers, shysters, and the like. Imposters of this sort were

commonly referred to as “generals of an empty regiment.” If ever one of them should commit an actual crime, he was unceremoniously locked up, tried, and sentenced just like any common criminal.

Inspectors-General

During the final years of August III's reign inspectors-general appeared in the ranks of the foreign-style regiments, a rank created by the great hetmans, who sometimes selected actual generals and sometimes merely licensed or promoted generals. There were two of them in the Crown and two in Lithuania, and their salary was set by the hetmans. The duties of the inspectors-general were to travel around to the regiments wherever they were stationed, to inspect them, and to report to the hetmans on what they found. One inspector was assigned to the infantry, and another to the cavalry. These inspections were conducted with the same exactitude as would be suggested by his relationship, whether close or indifferent, with the commanding officer and his under-officers. If the commanding officer was on good terms with, or was respected by, the inspector-general, everything in the regiment was reported as being in good condition, even if half of the regiment as to people and equipment was missing. If relations between the general and the inspector were indifferent or, worse, were hostile, nothing blameworthy escaped the inspector's eye.

When an inspection was rigorous, all excuses availing naught, the entire regiment was ordered to assemble, including even the soldiers standing guard, after which followed an accounting of the shortcomings. If the inspection occurred under favorable circumstances, on one excuse or another offered by the commanding general, the regiment was divided in half, with one half being inspected one day, and the other half the following day. In this way the regiment would be found to be in complete readiness, for the companies would lend each other personnel and other necessities. A soldier would appear one day under his own unit as himself, and the next day under another unit, standing in for someone who was missing.

The inspection looked as follows: either the entire regiment, or its half, was mustered on the review field and the inspector-general, standing at a certain distance, received the roster of men in the regiment, or its half, which was to undergo inspection that day. He, or someone he designated,

would read aloud the name of each person. First were read the names of persons on the general staff: the general, colonel, lieutenant colonel, majors, quartermaster, chaplain (often borrowed from some church, or for a small fee serving both a church and the regiment), auditor, regimental doctor, drummer, chief military officer, military petty officer, and—for the cavalry—the Feinschmidt in German or, in Polish, the regimental veterinarian; finally came members of the regimental band. From among the members of the staff, none would be missing, for everyone aspired to the rank of an officer and made certain that no staff positions were vacant for as long as an hour. Other of the above-mentioned service positions could remain empty for a certain period of time, when no qualified person was in readiness to take up a vacated position. In the meantime, it was no problem for the general's pocketbook for a position to be vacant for a month or more, as long as all positions were eventually filled with his own appointees come inspection time. After the names of the staff were read, the names of the regiment were read out in order of seniority, beginning with captain and proceeding down to the last drummer or bugler or, in the infantry, to the last piper, each person being called out by name and office.

As each person as was called, whether by his own name or by the one he had assumed, he responded in German with "*Jer*," in other words, "I am here," after which he moved from his spot—a cavalryman on horse and an infantryman on foot, passing by the inspector-general and giving him a respectful salute according to his rank and service: a cavalry officer with his sword, an infantryman with his pike, spontoon, or flintlock, a grenadier with his rifle, a rank-and-file cavalryman with his broadsword, a band-member or bugler with the instrument he played, a piper with his pipe, a drummer with his drum, each of them playing a brief flourish of sound. Others in service to the regiment with no special talent or tool at hand acquitted the occasion with a low bow and, having done that, moved to the other side of the reviewing square.

After the roster of soldiers had been exhausted, the names of the regimental drivers and their staff were read out, whom neither the generals nor the captains actually ever kept. The general kept his own harness horses and driver, but for purposes of the inspection ceremony he trotted out as many harnessed wagons of whatever type the staff was supposed to have. After the staff wagons came the regimental wagons, one for each compa-

ny. If the captain had a driver and horses at his disposal, he would have them harnessed to the company caravan, used once a year for inspections but otherwise never touched. If he did not have his own horses, he hired for the day a driver and dressed him in a revenueur's coat kept for the occasion, typically moth-eaten and ruined due to careless storage.

Each driver, like a soldier on command, lashed his horses and drove past the inspector-general, cracking his whip as he went as a sign of professional competence, after which he proceeded to the barn or, if he and his horses had been hired, then homeward.

After the entire regiment had passed from one side of the field to the other, the total number of heads was counted, to check to see whether the sums matched those contained in the roster which, on the occasion of a full regimental inspection, never matched, but always came out around half short.

Those whose regiments were not up to strength suffered the consequence of receiving a public reprimand, but beyond that there were no consequences other than provoking an endless round of excuses, dissimulations, and a thousand other evasions. Sometimes it resulted in a general or captain losing his rank, but only when a captain had no friends, or a general found that all of the officers in the Radom Commission²³⁷ had it in for him after a bad reference, that is, after a bad inspector-general's report.

After he had completed the head-count the inspector-general asked of all the soldiers whether any one of them had any grievance against his captain and, if so, would he please fall out and report it to him. Hardly anyone ever answered such an invitation, knowing full well that nothing would come of it beyond a reprimand for the captain and a promise of rectifying the wrong. After the inspection was over the reporting soldier would be certain to get a hundred lashes across his back on any made-up excuse, for if any such bold fellow ever stepped forward, that prospect was never avoided.

Judging things not as they should be, but according to how they are in the real world, the captain, having paid for his captaincy, had to find recompense at the expense of his soldiers for the amount spent and in order to derive a better income than his pay allowed, in exchange for which

²³⁷ See the chapter "The Radom Commission."

he allowed them to thief and pillage as long as they did not get caught, just like a lease-holder who, having paid dearly for his lease, fleeces and swindles his tenants to recover what the profitability of the land does not bring in.²³⁸

Following the last investigation of wrong-doings or, rather, following that pointless ceremony, a series of rifle drills and exercises were performed, after which the inspector-general left for his quarters, and the soldiers dispersed to their barracks, leaving things exactly as they had been before the inspection, to remain that way until the following year, when the same scene would play itself out as the year before.

If the general (i.e., the chief) had been pleased with the way his regiment had performed, he would order his soldiers to fire off a salute in honor of the inspector-general, this being the second attempt of the day at displaying soldierly skill, which often came out clumsily as if to spite him; which, however, he shrugged off, blaming it on bad powder or the mistakes of the fresh recruits, even though there hadn't been any. In reality the unevenness of fire arose from the fact that the soldiers were untrained in riflery, for the Republic did not cover the cost of gunpowder, and no general wanted to step in and help it out unless it was for some festival or funeral, which happened so infrequently that firearms skill was never developed, leaving it all to happenstance.



²³⁸ This odd justification of a captain's behaving badly toward his men could be read in the light of the fact that Kitowicz had himself been a captain (*rotmistrz*) in the army.



THE HETMANS

Hetmans (commanders-in-chief of the army) were second in command to the monarch. The office lasted from 1505 until the dissolution of Poland in 1795. They were divided into the Great Crown Hetman and his deputy, the Field Crown Hetman. In portraiture, they are shown carrying their buława, i.e., mace, or staff of office. Jan Klemens Branicki, who is mentioned throughout the Description, was Field Crown Hetman from 1735–1752, and Great Crown Hetman from 1752 until his death (the office was typically for life). Vastly wealthy, he owned twelve towns (including Białystok), 257 villages, and seventeen palaces. Politically, Branicki was allied with the Radzivils and Potockis, against the so-called familia (the Czartoryskis and allied families). A candidate for king in 1763–64, he was defeated by the familia candidate, Stanisław Poniatowski (who was, in fact, Branicki's brother-in-law).

A challenging exercise in describing glittering pomp and circumstance with pen and ink, Kitowicz largely succeeds in conveying the over-the-top magnificence of the Great Crown Hetman's colorful procession as he heads to an audience with the king. His vocabulary seems to fail him when looking for synonyms for "rich" (saddle, fabric, etc.) or "richly" (dressed, decorated, etc.), as the word occurs eight times in a single paragraph. Although this piece ends with a long anecdote concerning Branicki, the description of the parade itself is the more effective for the author's not tying it to any specific Great Crown Hetman, lending it a timeless quality of pageantry. As we have seen in many other instances, Kitowicz's descriptions often have a virtually cinematic, fly-on-the-wall quality to them, as his eye roves at will in and out of the corridors and chambers of the hetman's residence.

I should have put the hetmans right after the description of conscripted soldiers, or even better in front of them, since the hetmans were the leaders and heads of the entire army. I have mentioned the hetmans here and there, but I was not ready to describe them in that place along with everything else connected with the military, since they always were of two different aspects: one military and the other civilian, for the hetmans were, at the same time, both military leaders and senators. So here, as the military begins to yield to civilian matters, would appear to be the more appropriate place to describe them.

As soon as a gentleman received the staff of office as either crown or field hetman from his majesty the king, the first thing he had to do—if he dressed French-style—was to change into Polish clothing. I do not know whether it was the law or simply the custom that the hetmans dressed Polish-style; I only know that during the time of August III the custom was steadfastly upheld. Franciszek Ksawery Branicki, who was Great Crown Hetman after Jan Klemens Branicki, was first to break the rule (or custom) by not changing out of his French clothing when he accepted the staff of, first of all, Field Crown Hetman and then, later, Great Crown Hetman, but that was already under the reign of Stanisław August. By contrast, Great Crown Treasurer Antoni Kossowski, general of an infantry division while still under August III, dressed Polish-style. He adapted his dress to that of his regiment only when he wanted or was constrained to appear in the role of general, upon which he donned a gown made of regimental cloth but of Polish cut: a red *kontusz* with yellow lapels and a yellow wool *żupan* with thin silver trim at the waist and around the sleeves, an officer's scarf in place of a belt, black boots, and a black sheepskin cap topped with yellow wool.

The hetmans, whether under the title of Great Crown Hetman, Field Crown Hetman, or the Lithuanian hetmans, had beneath them one cavalry and one infantry regiment each. However, they never adopted the uniforms of their regiments but, whenever they wished to appear in a military way, they used instead the uniform of the hussars or the armored cavalry. Both winter and summer a hetman's uniform, just like that of all military men, was always of wool cloth and, whenever some officer wore a cotton or camlet²³⁹ uniform during the summer, he was called

239 *camlet*: a light wool-silk blend.

a dandy.²⁴⁰ Such a gown had no place in service, but only out of service. On their heads they did not wear sheepskin uniform caps but instead ermine *kołpaki* topped with carmine or navy blue velvet cloth. For the most part they used these uniforms when they showed themselves in public, for example at a public audience before the king or at the Senate's initial session. Other than that, they dressed in various civilian colors and materials, according to whatever was in fashion for the time of year.

No one during the reign of August III ever managed to see a hetman in the capital astride a horse, for usually that rank was awarded to oldsters born down by years and, in any case, the horse cavalry was largely going out of fashion then, especially among the great lords and their scions. Usually in public they used a carriage instead of a horse, an exception being regimental commanders, colonels, generals, and crown functionaries who, by request, or by virtue of being promoted or obtaining a profitable administrative position, received permission to accompany the king, who himself at times rode horseback to the castle or to the the *senatus consilium* in front of his carriage, a custom also accorded the hetmans, but only the military.

When the Great Crown or Lithuanian Hetman rode to the king for an audience with him, or to the Sejm or the *senatus consilium*, it was in his six-horse parade carriage with gold and silver harnesses guided by a coachman and fore-rider in French-style livery trimmed with silver or gold, satin belts fringed with gold or silver (depending on which went better with the color of the uniform), yellow boots with taps of either silver or pewter, and tall sable, marten, or sheepskin *kołpaks* topped off by trimmed wool, round like a sack, with a silver or golden tassel falling down over the left ear.

The fore-rider's lash and the coachman's whip were of silk with braided horsehair tips for louder cracking, and the handles of both the fore-rider's lash and coachman's whip were painted the color of their uniform. The fore-rider's and driver's cape were worn sideways, slung over the left shoulder and reaching halfway down, fastened with gold or silver tassels around the neck, allowing the satin lining to fold outward on the right. Cinched to the belt in front of the stomach, it gave the impression of the

240 In Polish, *gaszek*, the diminutive of *gach* (suitor, sweetie, ladies' man).

cloaks worn by the ancient Romans. And since the cloaks were broad and wide at the waist, in winter-time one might comfortably put on a sheep-skin coat underneath, leaving the coachman seated high up on the driver's seat looking like a haystack, and the fore-rider looking like Bacchus,²⁴¹ especially if he were tall, imposing, mustachioed, and older in years than the driver. Behind the driver on a lower seat stood a page dressed French, Hungarian, or Turkish style, richly dressed in gold, silver, and blue silk, holding onto the shoulders of the driver and standing facing backwards.

At the rear of the carriage stood two or three lackeys, all of them richly and extravagantly adorned, the lackeys German-style, and the *paiuks* Turkish-style. Alongside the carriage strode four *haiduks*, and in front of the carriage surged a large number of stable-boys and stable-masters, and behind them at a distance of several steps were seated on prancing horses the hetman's courtiers, colonels, generals, and locally residing enlisted men wanting to curry favor with the hetman, and after all of these, just in front of the fore-rider, rode the hetman's equerry and, after him, the stable-master. The equerry never yielded his place to anybody, not even to the most distinguished person.

On either side next to the doors of the carriage rode two pages or valets to the hetman. Right behind the rear wheels of the carriage walked janissaries in two even lines, marching track for track wherever the carriage rode, even following it deep into the mud in their fine yellow boots, and when after a couple times the boots lost their lustre, they would keep on giving them fresh ones. Behind the carriage between the two rows of janissaries two richly dressed *paiuks* would lead the hetman's horse by the bit, usually choosing either a gray or a pure white horse with a Turkish-style saddle studded with gold and precious stones over an equally rich fabric covering the entire back of the horse to the shins of the rear legs or, speaking in the language of horse-traders, as far as the pasterns. On one side of the saddle by the side of the horse hung a knight's sword, which was a weapon twice the length of a plain sword, as broad at the grip as a saber and as narrow at the tip as a rapier, sheathed in a rich round embossed silver scabbard; the handle was long, roundish, and without a handguard, with the grip made of precious stone encased in silver. On the other side

²⁴¹ *Bacchus*: the Roman god of agriculture, wine, and revelry, often pictured as grossly fat.

of the horse would be straight-sabers,²⁴² i.e., two double-edged straight-bladed knives four fifths of a cubit long, round at the end, both placed in a thick, round silver scabbard, also embossed, out of which protruded the rich thin handles of those knives. Such a knife resembled most of all a Jewish butcher's knife for slaughtering large animals. On the forward horn of the Turkish saddle hung a white horsetail in a golden net, or in a silken one worked with gold, half as long as the horse tail, swishing back and forth across the legs of the horse as he walked. This horsetail at its root was set into an elongated golden or gilded ball encrusted with diamonds and other precious stones, and was called a *buńczuk*, in imitation of the insignia of Turkish viziers. A second such tail hung from the other side of the saddle, and a third one was attached next to the horse's ear. The top of the horse's head, between his ears, was bedecked with a plume of ostrich feathers set into a sleeve studded with precious stones.

As often as the Great Hetman, whether Crown or Lithuanian, rode to a public audience with the king, to the prince primate, to some foreign dignitary, or to a session of the Sejm or the Senate, he was always accompanied by such a cavalcade. Boots soiled by the janissaries were taken back into the treasury and distributed to skivvies, stable boys, guards, and other such court servants. The hetmans' marshal also yielded such boots to his servants, because when there were too many of them, he would get too little in return by selling them back to the cobblers, especially when the Sejm went on for the regulation six weeks and the weather was foul. The field hetmans had the same kind of cavalcade in front of and behind their carriages as the great hetmans, except for the janissaries and the horse, neither of which they had.

A company of janissaries stood first watch in front of the great hetman's palace, after which Hungarian guards took over, while the third watch was in the hands of the Crown Foot Guard.²⁴³ A fourth, main watch by the dragoons of the hetman's regiment took up position on the gallery outside his rooms. Outside the rooms in which, on a table, rested the hetman's staff of office, and next to the hetman's bedroom, a detachment of lower-level officers from the Crown Foot Guard stood watch with pikes,

²⁴² In Polish, *koncerz*.

²⁴³ See the chapter "The Crown Foot Guard."

or rather spontoons. The hetman's anterooms were always full of soldiers-at-arms in residence or officers under orders, as well as persons of various rank, both military and civilian, whether for business, amusement, or just dropping by to pay respects to the hetman.

The authority of the hetmans was governed by certain laws, which I do not consider my task to describe, for they are not customs, which is what I have undertaken to write about here. Laws may regulate customs, but customs often depart from the law.

Hetmans were in full charge of the army and could do with it whatever they pleased, with no need for consulting either the Sejm or the *senatus consilium*. Still, the highest military authority was vested in the Radom Commission, whose authority extended even to the hetmans, in case they might ever exceed whatever their authority allowed. However, regarding their own personal matters, or matters taken up by them personally, the decrees of this commission had as much force as the hetmans deigned to grant it. One saw the strength of this authority in the case of the Ostróg ordination.²⁴⁴

Prince Janusz Sanguszko, the last and heirless possessor of the aforementioned ordination, under the pretext that the ordination from the time of its foundation all the way up to his day had never been ratified by any Sejm, the matter having been postponed in advance by several Sejms, and because none of the consistently broken Sejms under the reign of August III had ever made any mention of the ordination, the afore-mentioned Prince Janusz made use of this silence to enrich his purse, which had been depleted by riotous living. He split up the property comprising his ordination and distributed it to various people, renouncing in this way the wealth he had inherited.

This stratagem did not suit Great Crown Hetman Jan Klemens Branicki and so, as the guardian of the integrity of the entire Republic, he drove all the beneficiaries off the distributed property and used the army to occupy the entire Ostróg ordination, without bothering to consult any legal authority regarding his dispute with Prince Sanguszko who, stripped bare of everything he owned, began to cry foul by issuing manifestos far and wide, causing a general uproar among the nobility, who split into two parties, of which the hetman's side was the stronger, and his actions were ratified by the *senatus consilium*. In the meantime, the property of the ordination

²⁴⁴ On ordination, see note 82.

was conveyed with the help of the army to the administration of general Szoldrski of Greater Poland, pending the Sejm's resolution.

After all this, the hetman desisted, being content with merely showing his strength, in the face of which Sanguszko willy-nilly had to capitulate, and everything was returned to its former state. The ordination was returned to Sanguszko's possession, and the validity of his donations was suspended, pending any further resolution of the Sejm.

The sejmiks, Sejms, tribunals, and the Radom Commission all had deputies and representatives of the sort that the great hetmans liked to have on their side, understanding by this nobles sufficiently weak that they were unable to stand up to them. However, as far as the *familia* of the Czartoryskis was concerned, it disposed of such strength in numbers that it could stand up even to the hetmans, as we have already seen discussed more broadly under the resumption of the tribunals.²⁴⁵

The conferral of all ranks in the army along the foreign model²⁴⁶ was in the hands of the hetmans, as was promotion to colonel or adjutant general in the national-style companies, including the light cavalry. Generalships and captaincies among the national-style divisions were at the dispensation of the king, all of which greatly magnified the hetman's power since, except for the generals and captains who owed their promotions and decorations to the king, the remainder of officers in the military looked up to the hetmans as their benefactors, caring less about the king, from whom they could expect no promotion. For if some vacancy should appear in a Polish company, the king would typically fill it with some member of the nobility, even if the man had never served in that regiment or company, or not even in the army at all.

Also in the hetman's power were all kinds of military punishments for persons of any rank, all the way up to a summary judgment of execution within twenty-four hours under military law, although one never saw an actual example of such rigor. Suffice it to say that the reputation of the hetman among the military was such that he needed merely to threaten a wayward or blameworthy officer in private, without ever having to put any such judgment in force.

²⁴⁵ See "The Crown Tribunals."

²⁴⁶ See "Foreign-Style Regiments."



THE SICH AND THE HAIDAMAKS

This description of the conflicts between the Polish army and the haidamaks, or Ukrainian Cossack insurgents from the Zaporozhye region, perhaps does not shed any new light on that extraordinary political system based on professional brigandage, nor on the history of the several Cossack rebellions in Polish-occupied Ukraine in the eighteenth century, which are barely alluded to here. Nevertheless, it adds a Polish perspective to them, and a touch of exoticism to the Description.

Mostly recruited from outlaws, outcasts, runaway serfs, and escaped galley slaves, the Zaporozhian Cossacks, nursing an underlying grudge against non-ethnic, non-Orthodox Ukrainians (which in practice mainly meant Polish landowning colonizers and Jews, but also Catholic priests, seminary students, and Greek-Rite fellow Ukrainians), inhabited the sparsely populated steppes along the lower Dniepr river. Being on the fringes of the Russian empire, for a long time it was expedient for Russia (in Kitowicz's terms, Muscovy) to leave them alone, since they served as a buffer against the Crimean Tatars in one direction and Poland-Lithuania in the other, an arrangement formalized by treaty during the reign of Catherine the Great (1729-1796). The Cossacks were often employed by the Poles as mercenaries but, as Kitowicz notes, they were unreliable in battle against their fellow countrymen. As Russia extended its imperial reach southward, the Zaporozhian Cossacks became increasingly politically dispensable, until they were disbanded by decree in 1795, and their Sich was razed. Russia had already annexed most of Polish-held Ukraine in 1795, in the third and final partition.

A Sich amounted to an extensive male-only commune organized along military lines, deriving its livelihood from cattle rustling, horse thievery, and armed brigandage, the last ranging from waylaying defenseless travelers to invading landed estates and smaller towns and villages. The most celebrated such attack was on the town of Podolian Uman in Central

Ukraine in 1768, part of a general national uprising against Ukrainian cultural suppression known as the koliyivshchina (impalement rebellion). During the course of the Uman engagement, controversially glorified by Ukrainian national bard Taras Shevchenko in his epic poem Haidamaky, the haidamaks slaughtered in cold blood an estimated 20,000 Poles, Jews, and Greek Catholics, many of whom had taken refuge in churches and synagogues.

It is worth noting that the colonially aggrandizing term Novorossiia (new Russia), concocted by the Muscovite state to refer to the newly-conquered territory to the south of Zaporozhye, is roughly congruent with the land in eastern Ukraine contested in the twenty-first century between the government of Ukraine and insurgents swearing allegiance to Russia.

O.E.S.

The *haidamaks* had their seat in the *Sich*, in land belonging to Muscovy, a land bordering on the Crimean Tatars, and if I mention the *haidamaks* in a section treating of the Polish army, it is because I consider it appropriate to describe their home territory, both because I have gathered information about it and, especially, because the reigning Muscovite Queen Catherine II has completely eradicated these ruffians.²⁴⁷

The *Sich* is a town,²⁴⁸ or rather encampment, of Zaporozhian Cossacks in land belonging to Moscow, consisting of wide open uninhabited plains stretching for dozens of miles in every direction. As to who inhabited this land earlier, and when the Cossacks about whom I am going to write settled there, I have been unable to acquire any certain information, and so, without going into their beginnings, I will write about the middle and the end of the Cossacks under discussion.

There were, in the Cossack *Sich*, using their term, forty *kurins* or, in Polish, *korzeni*.²⁴⁹ Each *kurin* consisted of ten companies of soldiers, and

²⁴⁷ Obviously, Kitowicz is describing the Cossacks here not because of that, but because of their inherent interest and color.

²⁴⁸ The word itself, related to Ukrainian *sikty* (chop, clear forest), implies a “clearing.”

²⁴⁹ Despite Kitowicz’s etymology, which actually makes semantic sense, the word *kurin* is not re-

each company was composed of a hundred cavaliers or, simply, in our terms, soldiers-at-arms which, taken together, made for a forty-thousand strong army ready to obey the imperial command of Muscovy. However, during my lifetime Moscow never used them for any war, including even when doing battle with the Prussian king or the Turks. I have heard that this was because the people were so unreliable that they would vanish as soon as you needed them. These Cossacks had over them a hetman,²⁵⁰ or commander-in-chief, elevated to this office from their number by the Muscovite empress, and he was called by the Cossack term *koshevoi* (camp-leader).²⁵¹ Rather than being their leader, he was their final and ultimate arbiter in all things, for why should anyone give him the title of leader, when he never led his army out onto the field of battle?

As to religion, they were Greek schismatics.²⁵² They had their own church and priests, and that was all those renegades needed by way of religious instruction. They had no wives, nor did they allow any women to come among them, and whenever one of them was proved to have had intercourse with a woman outside camp, by decree he was tied to a stake in the kurin he came from and was beaten with sticks and canes until dead, as if honoring thereby the state of chastity; for which reason they were also called brave-hearts or pretty-boys, because in actuality they led a bestial existence, engaging in the sin of sodomy with one another or coupling with cattle, for which lewdness, disgusting to nature, there was never any punishment, as though converse with a woman was considered filthier than with a mare or cow.

They practiced very little agriculture. For the most part they fished, hunted, and raised great herds of various livestock and horses. Their horned cattle differed as to coat from the cattle in our Ukraine,²⁵³ as they

lated to Polish *korzeń* (root, *pl.* spice) but to *kurzyć* (to smoke), and the original Ukrainian word *kurin* means "hovel, smoky mud hut." In any case, here the word refers to military divisions.

250 Alternately, *ataman*. The words *ataman* and *hetman* are possibly related and borrowed by Polish from German *Hauptmann* (headman, chief), although some believe that *ataman* is of Turkish origin.

251 From Ukrainian *kosh* (Cossack or Tatar camp).

252 "Schismatics" here is Kitowicz's term for Ukrainians who had not converted from Orthodox Christianity to Greek Catholicism under the Brześć Union of 1596, which permitted Orthodox Christians to retain their traditional rites under Catholic suzerainty.

253 That is, in Western, Polish-occupied Ukraine.

were red. They also traded in dried fish, hides, fur, and various things acquired from banditry, which was their chief profitable industry.

Every Cossack cavalier was entered in a register which, taken together, added up to the number of forty thousand. Each had his own house and storeroom for goods sold or traded for grain or liquor with merchants who came to the Sich, for they themselves would never leave the settlement for any reason.²⁵⁴ A cavalier had his retainers, that is, several servants: five, six, seven or more, depending on how prosperous he was. Whenever a cavalier reached venerable old age he chose one from among his household, the one who was dearest to him, took him to the camp office, and ceremoniously entered him as his successor. And that person, after the death of such a father, took possession of his entire substance, while the rest of the household either stayed where they were or dispersed to other cavaliers. But if anyone wanted to aspire to become a successor, he had to stick to one cavalier and serve him faithfully until that person's death.

Cavaliers themselves, often being prosperous property owners, rarely journeyed away for brigandage, but sometimes they did, and then they became chieftains of a band of haidamaks. It was only necessity that drove cavaliers to undertake such expeditions: either they had lost their fortunes, or they simply had a heart and hankering for plunder. By and large, however, it was freedmen who went on campaign who, before they left, first had to inform their cavalier about it and then the gathered band had to present itself to the overall camp commander who, in this way, since he always knew how many there were and in which direction they were headed for brigandage, in case the commander had good relations with the Polish lords, he could warn them to be on their guard and inform them how many there were and in which direction they were heading. The camp commander was not able to forbid them from going out to plunder if they liked, for after all it was virtually the policy of the Muscovite court to keep these brigands under their protection for that very reason, for them to oppress the Poles and Tatars, while they themselves perished in various battles and executions so that they never grew to excessive numbers. Besides, compared to other services one could perform at the side of one's leader, brigandage was the shortest and most praiseworthy route for attaining the

²⁵⁴ This statement is contradicted in the next paragraph.

rank of cavalier. After seven years of successful brigandage one would already be first in line for taking the place of a vacating cavalier. Given how many of them perished at the hands of Polish military forays, such fortune came to very few, as we will see below.

Another service, even shorter than the brigandage track, although not as highly esteemed, was cooking. Cooking, if it were performed for two years without complaint, could turn a cook into a cavalier. But such work was almost intolerable. Each kurin had its own cook. Whether day or night, he had to have food ready for Cossacks returning at any time from their various occupations. He was both cook and bursar. He first had to importune with the company commander about what the company's kitchen needed for food. He did not cook any fancy or varying dishes, but only two, offered time and again, and that was the entire Cossack fare, paid for out of the common treasury: millet porridge, which was rarely, on meat days, seasoned with lard, and on fast days with vegetable oil; and cabbage stew with dried fish without any flavoring. He would pour out and pile these dishes up on a wooden trough, less and less as his supply ran low. When a Cossack came to eat, whether alone or with several others, he would sit hunched over next to the trough, take a spoon from his belt, and eat from this and that dish for as long as he pleased. They cooked these dishes in brass pots hung over the fire on three crossed sticks.

The same cook had tobacco under his control which, like the food described above, was distributed for smoking out of the common treasury. In every kurin, not far from the food troughs, stood several large clay pipes with several smoke holes around them, plugged with stoppers tied to a string. Whenever a Cossack did not want to deplete his own tobacco, he would sit down to the common pipe, take off one of the stoppers, and put a pipe stem into the smoke hole for as long as he wished. The cook, for his part, looked after the pipes and kept adding more tobacco to them as they grew empty. If they had long enough pipe stems, as many as eight Cossacks could fit next to one pipe, for as the length of the pipe stem grew, the circle became wider, making it possible to accommodate more smokers. As he left, each Cossack would plug his hole back up with the stopper and hang the stem back on its string.

If the cook were sleepy and did not look after his duties in these two matters, any Cossack who did not find ready food or tobacco for himself

had the right to thrash him with a whip and, in addition to this punishment, frequent complaints arising on his account led to his constant degradation. The public amenity of food and tobacco was paid for out of a fund collected from the cavaliers out of their fortunes as a sort of social contribution.

For reason of the existence of these public tables and tobacco paid for out of the common pot, no cavalier supplied board to those who worked for him in fishing, hunting, feeding pigs, or tending crops, except for those who, for reason of their duties, had to be at their principal's side. Nor did any freedman take a yearly pay; it was up to the generosity of the cavalier to share with him any of the benefits related to the work the freedman performed for him.

Drinks were for sale in taverns: mead, wine, and vodka, the last being the favorite and most common drink among the Cossacks. Each person was free for his own coin to drink as much as he pleased, as long as he did not abandon his obligations or cause a commotion—which transgressions were severely punished. For this reason, even though the Sich was inhabited by the worst sort of men in the whole world—apostates of the faith, runaways from various religious orders, outlaws, and escaped prisoners from various parts—such enormous peace and security reigned among them that not so much as a hair fell off the head of a traveler coming to the Sich to buy or sell goods, or on other business. Even if money were placed in the middle of the road, no one would touch it. Violating either the person or property of another, whether resident or guest, was punishable by instant death on anyone falling under suspicion. In upholding this principle, everyone immediately participated in tracking down and exposing a criminal as soon as a transgression in either of these two regards occurred. The rule of human law extended only as far as their borders; beyond them it extended only to those who had bought or sold goods in the Sich and were returning home under a safe conduct pass from the camp commander. However, the utmost danger threatened those bringing goods to the Sich or coming away with them as soon as they crossed the border marking the Sich steppe, that is, the trackless plains leading to the Sich from the inhabited part of Ukraine.

After receiving permission to go out on a raid from the camp commander, the haidamaks would go to church, where they received the bless-

ing of the priest as if going out on a mission of piety dear to God, namely the extirpation of Catholics, Jews, and Rusyns²⁵⁵ not belonging to their dissenting schismatic faith.

They often invaded Tatar lands, since those were nearest, separated from the Sich only by the Danube. From there, they generally only seized herds of horse and horned cattle from their pastures, to then hastily beat a retreat over to their side by fording the river, beyond which the Tatars never dared to chase them, seeing their ready resistance, stronger than that of their own forces, contenting themselves with slaughtering any haidamak they managed to cut off from the group before he made it back to the river.

They did not venture deeply into Tatar territory, nor plunder Tatar settlements, since the Tatars, being the same kind of brigands as the haidamaks themselves, were always prepared to leap on their horses and gather forces to meet an invader. The haidamaks merely kept watch near the river shores where the Tatars grazed their herds, in order to suddenly leap out from hiding at some unsuspecting or dozing Tatar (which, owing to the tall grasses overgrowing the *Dzikie Pola* [wild fields] was not difficult for them to do) and strangle the man or cut his throat and then seize the cattle. If it was horses they were after, they first made sure where the lead stallion was. One haidamak, catching and mounting it, would yelp at the top of his lungs and rush toward the river with the horse's herd thundering after him, while the others would follow, riding and driving before them the other horses they had captured. Or, if time did not permit the capturing of horses, they would sneak on foot in the grass to the river and, capturing cattle as quietly as possible, they would just as quickly and quietly drive them into the river, where other Cossacks would be waiting for them in dugout canoes for ferrying them across and for repulsing any Tatar chase.

They always made expeditions into Polish Ukraine in the spring, and returned before winter. When two or three hundred horse-backed riders would leave the Sich, they would divide into different parties, first so that they would be able to cover more territory; secondly, so that they would be able more easily to give the slip to Polish detachments chasing

²⁵⁵ By "Rusyns," Kitowicz means speakers of Ukrainian-related dialects, often referred to as Ruthenians, who populated the western reaches of Ukraine, many of whom were adherents of Greek Catholicism.

them; thirdly so that in case they were caught and defeated, not everyone would perish together; and fourthly, because in small groups they were able to hide more easily. Then they would form into two identical groups, not strictly connected to each other, but separately seeking the same fortune: some of them plundered on horse, others on foot. Whether cavalry or infantry, they used no other weapon than pikes and arquebuses.²⁵⁶ The infantry, capable of concealing themselves better in the thick Ukrainian grass, were more difficult for our people to deal with than the cavalry, for they could do harm to our forces with their arquebuses from out of hiding; and if they were ever surrounded, they defended themselves to the last man, so that our forces, taking heavy fire, often had to withdraw, while they themselves, waiting until nightfall, were able to slip away even while being surrounded. Whenever a Polish expeditionary force pressed so hard upon the haidamaks that they were no longer able to retreat, they would stand in a row, take off their caps, take a bow toward the Poles, and only then begin to defend themselves—something they did partly out of insolence, and partly to pluck up their courage.

Poles had it easier with their cavalry, especially when the dragoons were deployed on the Polish side. Dismounting their horses and giving fire while formed into platoons, they could quickly disperse the haidamaks; then the armed horse cavalry and forward guard would fall on them as they withdrew in disarray. They would catch some alive, kill others, and, if nothing else, they would scatter to the four winds the supply train they had brought with them, along with its accumulated swag. But when the dragoons were absent, it was difficult for the Poles to inflict harm on the haidamaks, and sometimes they suffered serious damage from them in return.

Many from the criminal class of Jews and Polish Rusyns²⁵⁷ would attach themselves to the haidamaks as they rode out from the Sich. After fighting alongside them throughout the summer, they would then disperse in the winter to the villages, serving as helpers in taverns and stokers in distilleries. Others, adopting the criminal way of life for good, would return to the Sich with the haidamaks, and they comprised the seed and posterity of the haidamaks who, in addition to such fellow tribesmen,

256 An early form of flintlock rifle. The coat-of-arms of the town of Uman, site of the Cossack massacre of 1768, features a haidamak brandishing a pike.

257 That is, Rusyns on Polish territory.

would also kidnap young boys, whether foreign or of their own kind, and in this way they multiplied and kept themselves going, even though they had no wives.

The haidamaks attacked noble manses, villages, and even towns, not letting anyone off the hook, whomsoever they were able to rob. They killed those they attacked only reluctantly, unless it was out of special personal revenge on the part of a servant, peasant, or Jew run off to the Sich. While they would torture people mercilessly in order to extract money from them, they would be satisfied by a large or easy catch offered without heavy inquisition and, not torturing anyone, would only administer a forget-me-not with a whip across the shoulders, adding as a parting admonition "*Prashchai!*" (farewell).²⁵⁸ For which reason all the Ukrainian nobility²⁵⁹ maintained from several dozen to several hundred Cossacks at their court to guard against these brigands by day and night, whether at home or on the road. Every night larger and smaller towns would guard themselves against attack, as half the people, armed with pots and large drums to raise the alarm, would walk the streets. Notwithstanding such caution, often enough lords in their manses, peasants in the villages, Jews, townsmen, churches, and cloisters would be plundered when the household guard was either overcome by the haidamaks or, being in collusion with them, would pretend to be forced by them to escape. For this reason the whole summer long in the Ukraine, none of the lesser gentry, peasants, or Jewish tenants would spend the night at home, but each soul before sunset would high himself out into the steppe, hiding his fortune, each person hiding from the other: husband from wife, father and mother from children, children from their parents, and each from the other, so that if one were found they couldn't betray the others under pain of torture when asked about them.

The same haidamaks would stake out public roads. Stealthily taking up a position in a valley through which a road ran, they would be on the lookout for a cloud of dust which, in that abundant land, rises high up into the air like a cloud of smoke after any traveler. They would then estimate the size of the dust cloud and, if someone were riding with a small convoy

²⁵⁸ Kitowicz here uses the word *Porastai*.

²⁵⁹ By this are meant Polish landowners living in Ukraine.

or without any at all, they would fall upon him, strip him of everything he had and, knocking him about the shoulders with their pikes, that is, with the wooden part of their spears, they would let him go, dressed only in his shirt, saying their customary "*Prashchai!*"

Those who returned safely to the Sich gave half of their booty to their cavaliers, and the cavaliers gave one-tenth of this half to the camp commander. The same division was in effect for horses and cattle taken from the Tatars.

Every summer our army of both Polish and foreign conscripts waged campaigns against these renegades, conscripting from time to time native-born Cossacks, that is, Cossacks at the courts of various noblemen. However, for the most part they went over to the other side, for Cossacks will truly persecute their brothers only reluctantly, and probably only when the action unfolds under the eye of a Polish commander, but even then, side-wise and at a distance, as wolves do with pups born of a wolf mother and a dog father: they give them a sniff and then go off, each in their own way.²⁶⁰

The Cossacks stationed in Uman belonging to Potocki, the Crown Carver and later the voivode of Kiev, were the most effective in hunting down and encountering the haidamaks, except that they did this service for the country very unwillingly. They never harried the haidamaks when, in spring, they were heading out into the countryside, but only in the fall when they came upon them returning with their pillage. Then they would cut off their advance, take their loot, and, if they decided to defend themselves, beat the haidamaks with a ready will. However, if the haidamaks put up only a weak resistance and took flight, they did not feel much like fatiguing their horses by chasing after them. Another thing was that if anyone who was robbed wanted the return of property recovered by the Uman Cossacks, they had to pay for it dearly; no one got anything back for free, for they considered that such things were rightfully theirs, acquired at the risk of their own life.

The Polish commanders, when they captured a haidamak alive, pardoned none, but immediately marched him to the square or to a tree where they would hang him from a branch or, if they had the time, they

²⁶⁰ This virtually Homeric simile is one of many animal similes employed by Kitowicz in his *Description*, and one of the few conscious literary devices employed by him.

would impale him on a stake, which execution took place in the following way. They would strip a haidamak and lay him on his stomach, and an executioner, or a lad skilled at execution, would be used, who would take a cypress stake sharpened at one end with a hatchet and stick it into the hole out of which excrement exits a person, and he would harness a pair of oxen to slowly draw the haidamak onto the stake, correcting him to make sure it went in straight. Sitting the haidamak up on the stake, and sometimes even two on the same one, in case there were many people to be executed and not enough stakes to go around, they would lift the stake up and plant it in the ground. If the stake went straight up through the head or neck, then the haidamak died quickly. But if it came out his shoulder or his side, then he lived on the stake until the third day, sometimes crying out for *horylka*, that is, vodka, and he would drink whatever was given to him.

Such cruel punishment in no way discouraged the haidamaks. They took it as some kind of heroism to die upon the stake. When drinking vodka together, and one would become comrades with another, he would wish him, "*Chtoby ty so mnoju na jednym palu strytyl!*", in other words, "May you and I be stuck on the same stake!" There were others of such hardened heart that, instead of howling in pain, they would call out to the person directing the impalement, "You're sticking it in crooked, master!"²⁶¹ as though he felt no pain or only as much as if someone were fitting him with a tight pair of shoes. Because they faced such a cruel death, even though they mocked it, haidamaks everywhere would defend themselves to the last man. For fifty haidamaks we would need two or three hundred of ours to get the better of them. An equal or slightly larger number was never enough to overcome them.

That is everything of certainty that I have been able to remember about what I have seen and heard about the conscripted Polish army and the regular Ukrainian haidamak enemy. Since my aim is to write about Polish customs during August III, I cannot skip over one rumor, which I consider fairy tale and superstition, but in which the Poles strongly believed, that among the haidamaks there were many such whom bullets could not touch. They swore under oath that on more than one occasion

261 "Master" was the form of address used with an executioner; see the chapter "On Torture."

they had seen haidamaks brushing bullets off themselves which had struck their face or breast, that they would take bullets from under their arm and hurl them back at the Poles. For which reason our men, piling one superstition on top of another, when they cast bullets, would pour consecrated wheat over them, so that a shot thus blessed would be effective against a haidamak.





ON ORDERS

The Order of the White Eagle, founded in 1705 by August II Mocny (the Strong, father of August III), is still Poland's oldest and highest honor for service to the state, although its honor was rather debased during August III's time, as we see in this basically mocking review of it. Strictly speaking, it is a civilian, rather than a military distinction. The Order Virtuti Militari (Order of Military Merit), not established until 1792 by King Stanisław August Poniatowski, is said to be the world's oldest military decoration still in use today.

O.E.S.

There was only one Polish honorary distinction, and that was the Order of the White Eagle, established by August II, and it was awarded infrequently to various of the Polish lords, and then only to such people as could count their yearly income by the multiple thousands or millions. Toward the end of August III's reign, orders were distributed more thickly, as they were offered for sale under the pretext of the royal treasury's having been dissipated by the Prussian war, taking in ten thousand red złotys or more from those rich enough to afford it and desirous of such a trinket. However, when this commodity fell in demand, while at the same time the royal minister Count Brühl's appetite for money as the greatest of the world's commodities continued to grow, the fee became greatly reduced. In the end one could acquire the order for a thousand red złotys or less. But in any case, in order to maintain political respect for this sign of royal favor, it was given only to senators, ministers, and major officials of the Crown and of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Anyone of lesser rank could not get the medal, even if he were willing to pay a fortune for it. It was also given gratis to certain persons popular with the court and deemed deserving by the minister. This was called receiving an order for free, and it was not neces-

sary to pay anything except for the value of the medal, while the going rate for it could be as much as a hundred and twenty thousand red zlotys. But it did not have very much inherent worth, being only a piece of gold weighing about as much as twenty red zlotys, enameled on one side and incrustated with eight small diamonds.²⁶² Everything together with the cost of manufacture could not have come to more than around sixty red zlotys.

Besides the cost of the order, a person receiving it “for free” would have to come up with several dozen red zlotys for tipping the royal butler, door-men, and lackeys who did not fail to come forward one after the other to congratulate the recipient on his receiving the honor, wheedling out of him several dozen ducats each, which all together, along with the cost of the medal, could come to an expenditure of two hundred red zlotys, more or less according to the generosity of the medal recipient, after whose death the medal would ceremoniously be returned to the king by one of the family, along with a speech offering thanks in the name of the deceased for the honor accorded him and his house, and ingratiating themselves to further royal favor.

Every “ordered” gentleman had a star sewn onto every garment he owned, even onto his coat, his fur, practically even onto his bathrobe, so that it be known everywhere that he had an order. Whenever he went out into public view he always had to be accompanied by at least two lackeys; and that was good only for the star by itself; when he put the order on a sky-blue ribbon across his shoulder from right to left, he would be accompanied by an entire cavalcade, in both front and back. At such moments both he and all his courtiers would obligatorily be armed with either a saber or a straight sword. Even should he be visited by a guest during the day, he would have to keep up appearances.

As long as there were only a few of them (since those so elevated would have to have been great lords), ordered gentlemen used no other conveyances than six-horse carriages accompanied by a whole cavalcade of courtiers in front of the carriage and a detachment of livery in back; but when orders began to rain down more thickly, they slowly began to adopt two-horse carriages without the assistance of courtiers, so that it soon became

²⁶² Kitowicz is forgetting about the ninth diamond, for the eagle's eye. See the description further below.

the fashion that only on festival days would they arrive on royal property with six horses, and with only one courtier as guard. Except for such royal gatherings, they would visit other places in two-horse carriages, not counting Count Brühl, prince primates,²⁶³ hetmans, and Potocki, voivode of Kiev, for these gentlemen never traveled anywhere except in six-horse conveyances with a numerous retinue of followers and livery, even if the trip sometimes might only last from one end of the street to the other.

Toward the end of August III's reign, all voivodes, ministers, and, for the most part, seated castellans²⁶⁴ were "ordered," and it became more or less the fashion that when one or another gentleman received a senatorial chair or a ministerial rank he would be given an order to go along with it, and sometimes both would come with good remuneration, or sometimes not, but still it came with all the accompanying value of the order and requirements for extra livery, as just described.

Should a gentleman not be content with an order as it came out of the royal wardrobe, he would fashion himself a richer one, with a star to go along with it, using both of them on ceremonial court occasions, for example: on the day of the election and coronation of the king, on New Year's Day, Easter, and on the 3rd of August, which was for some reason celebrated as the royal name-day, the day on which the king had been named August III, even though he was born on the 7th of October, 1696,²⁶⁵ and even though, according to the Roman calendar, the 3rd of August is dedicated to the finding of the relics of St. Szczepan,²⁶⁶ not to St. Augustus. Gentlemen went overboard competing with one another by copiously encrusting both the order and its star with diamonds, which in some cases could come to more than twice a hundred thousand regular Polish złotys.

Although the Polish Order of the White Eagle is familiar to all even now, lest its lofty status perish through some misfortune, as has happened to similar orders in France, I will paint it with my pen so that the Reader may remember it.

263 That is, the head of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland. For Brühl, see notes 45 and 155.

264 See the Glossary of Commonly Used Terms.

265 Actually, the king was born on the 17th, not the 7th, of October.

266 St. Szczepan (Stephen), who died ca. 36 AD, is celebrated as the first Christian martyr, having been stoned to death by Jews whom he was attempting to reform. His relics were discovered in the year 417.

It was a small three-inch cross, equally wide as it was long. In the middle was a round shield showing a rampant one-headed white eagle with wings unfurled and legs spread wide. Radiating out from the shield were four flat sides of a cross with narrow ends toward the shield while at the other end they became broader and ended in two prominent horns. As a whole, then, the shape of the order expressed a square cross with eight corners. Simple diamonds, one each, were set in the corners and in the eye of the eagle. The entire medal was fashioned of gold enameled in white on one side. The star worn on the clothing was two times larger than the order and of the same shape, but without the eagle. The four wings of the star were embroidered on thick cloth in golden thread with the words "*Pro Fide, Rege et Lege*" (For Faith, King, and the Law), divided in four. On the star worn by the king it read "*Pro Fide, Grege et Lege*" (For Faith, the People, and the Law).

They say that when August III sent Stanisław Poniatowski, Lithuanian Crown Carver, to Petersburg to help against the Prussian king, he decorated him with an order. The royal valet, called upon according to custom to sew a star for the order, in his haste fashioned one whose motto read "*Pro Fide, Grege et Lege*," which was taken as a sign that Poniatowski was to be king after August. But nobody actually observed this during August's time but only after Poniatowski actually did become king. For of course a prophet prophesies best who prophesizes after the fact.

In addition to the Polish order just described, orders conferred by foreign states were also in use: the Austrian and the Spanish Order of the Golden Fleece,²⁶⁷ along with various French, Muscovite, English, and others. Finally, there were small crosses sewn on one's garment which are supposedly common in Rome, and regarding which the Italians, according to their frivolous nature, thought up the motto "*Pur non pisiare*" (for not pissing), making an allusion to a spot on a wall where passing Italians are accustomed to release urine and the wall's owner makes a small cross with the inscription "*Per amorem Dei nolite pisiare*," (for the love of God, don't urinate), hoping thereby to avoid further ruin to the wall. And so, by extension, when they see the little sewn-on cross they say, "He pinned a cross on himself so no one will piss on him."

²⁶⁷ The Order of the Golden Fleece, in existence since 1430, was a Roman Catholic order conferred by both Austria and Spain and was one of Europe's most prestigious.

VI.

LIVES

and

ENTERTAINMENTS

of the

NOBILITY



OLD-FASHIONED COOKERY

A set-up chapter to the following one on “new-fashioned” cookery, the present chapter reveals Kitowicz to be a veritable gourmand with an impressive knowledge of culinary craft as practiced in the finer homes of his day, where one gets the (surely exaggerated) impression that everything could be found in super abundance, and that hospitality consisted in the piling on of more and more of everything.

*The first Polish cookbook was published in 1682 by Stanisław Czerniecki, master chef of Aleksander Lubomirski, voivode of Kraków, and Kitowicz’s description of food preparation at the beginning of August III’s reign falls within the culinary tradition of that work: heavy on pepper, ginger, garlic, vinegar, and other pungent seasonings. This chapter should obligatorily be read in conjunction with the description of the wedding feast in Book XII of Adam Mickiewicz’s *Pan Tadeusz*, in which dish is piled upon dish, and the fancy frosted sugar centerpiece slowly melts, recounting in successive layers the change of the seasons, whose remnants are nibbled up at the end by the well-oiled guests.*

O.E.S.

Under old Polish custom, still in effect at the beginning of August III’s reign, dishes were not elaborate. Broth, borscht, a chop of meat, and cabbage stew made with various pieces of meat, sausage and pork fat, thinly sliced and mixed with sauerkraut, called rogue’s stew.²⁶⁸ Then there was goose cooked with cream and dried mushrooms

²⁶⁸ A description of modern-day *bigos*, mentioned on several occasions in the *Description*, the Polish “national dish” if there is one to this day. Also called *bigos hultajski* (rogue’s stew), or *bigos staropolski* (old Polish bigos), it is said to have originated under king Władysław Jagiełło in 1385. In *Pan Tadeusz*, Book IV, lines 826–845, Mickiewicz describes old Polish bigos as melting in the mouth of its own accord.

cut into tiny cubes and sprinkled with pearl barley; and blackened goose, which in the finer households was prepared in the following way. The cook would put a handful of straw on some coals. Lacking fresh straw, it might be plucked straight out of a boot,²⁶⁹ to which would be added a spoonful or more of raw honey and, according to requirements, a quantity of strong vinegar, mixing it with the burnt straw and sprinkling it with pepper and ginger. After this treatment, the goose would become black, a dish well received in those days and served at the most elegant tables. No one will claim that I am making up this straw additive in order to make fun of the olden days, once he calls to mind *tarnasol* strips,²⁷⁰ the dyed pieces of cloth which to this day cooks use to color gelatin dishes, and candy-makers to color sweets. After all, those pieces are nothing but the remnants of old linen shirts, knickers, and long-johns. If he does not believe me, let him go to a spice store and order a pound of them, and he will recognize among them collars off shirts and scraps of underwear. And if he says that those pieces of cloth first had to be washed clean before becoming colored, he might consider that the fire with which the straw was burnt for the goose would have rid it of dirt better than water would have purified the cloth.

Further dishes were: tripe, sometimes flavored with saffron (especially in the Sandomierz district, where they called the people yellow-bellies after that tripe and after their veal, flavored with the same saffron), and sometimes not, but instead served in a white sauce with beaten flour; so-called gray veal or veal whitened with cream; chickens, pullets, ruddy goose, turkey, capons, pheasant, lamb with garlic, suckling pig, jellied calves' feet served cold, smoked beef and, in Greater Poland, smoked mutton and pork. All this would be seasoned with various flavors and condiments: almonds, raisins, mace, cloves, nutmeg, ginger, pepper, saffron, pistachios, pine nuts, truffles, honey, sugar, rice, and lemons (but very little of the last, for lemons at that time were very expensive,

269 Kitowicz seems to have been in a silly mood when writing this piece; see the following rambling digression on *tarnasol*. Blackened goose would likely have been a winter's dish. A boot was routinely stuffed with straw as an inner sole. Of interest here is the crossed identity in Kitowicz's mind of his imaginary Reader who, being in the future from the action, obviously has no ability to check on the author's claim by going to a local spice store, even had the purpose of his going there in the first place made logical sense.

270 *tarnasol*: apparently litmus cloth, using moss-based dyes for coloring jellies and candies. In Polish, this word is barely attested outside Kitowicz.

the cheapest costing a tynf per lemon, so sourness in case of need was achieved with vinegar); continuing: sausages, sometimes with rice mixed in, liver sausage; and game meats: hare, doe, deer, fallow deer, boar, quail, partridge, wild duck, grouse, smaller fowl, *paté*, and, in Ruthenia, *ptarmigan*.²⁷¹ These meats would be served together with such garden vegetables as carrots, parsnips, turnips, beets, and sweet cabbage. Such dishes were for the first course and would be boiled and fried in a way which, in French, would be called *ragoût* or *fricassée*. For the second course, the same kind of meats and poultry would be placed on the table, either plain or drenched in some sauce.

With all of these dishes, the most important thing was the amount, so that plates and bowls all had to be rounded. Amidst the mentioned roast meats were set out layer cakes and French pastries, which still may be seen, but the pastries of those days, as evidence of the lack of perfection in the art of cooking, were very thin and coarse compared to today's delicacies. They were made not with fresh butter, but rather with old, sometimes even turned green, for more of that was available and it added more aroma even when used in lesser quantity than young butter. For every luxury at its beginnings must take account of the frugality from which it first arose, and the tongue cannot recognize a delicacy of taste except through the use of increasingly finer ingredients, so that someone who has not tasted layer cakes and French pastries baked with young butter would eagerly consume cakes baked with aged butter as revelations, better at least than noodles and pierogi.

Amidst the plates, piled high with various kinds of fowl and cake, as long as the size of the table allowed, there would be set out two or three enormous platters composed in the shape of a pyramid made of various roasts, which two *haiduks* would carry, for one would not have been able to lift it by himself. On the bottom these pyramids would have two large roasts of beef on which would be set one and another quarter of veal, topped off with mutton, turkey, goose, capons, chicken, partridge, and snipe. The higher it got, the smaller the kind of bird that would be used. At the request of the host, from off these towers, plates, and platters guests who were more adept at carving would dismantle these roast pyramids

²⁷¹ *ptarmigan*: a small game bird of the grouse family.

and serve in order those sitting around the table, not forgetting to reserve for themselves the best pieces which, after everyone had been served, they would set upon themselves.

For both the first and second course,²⁷² all meat and fowl went into the pot, sauce pan, or onto the spit in either their whole natural shape or cut into chunks. Further below we will see how culinary art, as it became perfected over time, was able to fashion the bodies of some creatures out of others, for example serving a roast in the shape of a carp or pike, and other such things.²⁷³

The third course consisted of fruits from the garden and various sweets served on platters and plates, among which meticulously crafted towers, ciphers, coats of arms, houses, etc., made of frosted sugar mixed with tragacanth gum, were set out, to be broken, eaten, and destroyed by the revelers.²⁷⁴ Fasting dishes followed the same routine as meat dishes, except that at that time Poles maintained their fast more strictly, in that no butter or dairy products would be found on any lord's table; everything would be made with olive oil or the oil extracted from linen, hemp, or poppy seeds, or from almonds.



²⁷² In today's Poland, the first course of a meal almost obligatorily consists of soup, and the second course of meat, a starch, and mixed grated vegetables. The third course is optional, dessert often being served earlier, as at English high tea.

²⁷³ See the following chapter, "New-Fashioned Cookery."

²⁷⁴ Compare *Pan Tadeusz*, Book XII, lines 180ff.



NEW-FASHIONED COOKERY

The present selection catches Kitowicz in a quandary, as he finds himself torn between loyalty to the traditional Polish ways of cooking on the one hand (see the preceding chapter), and fascination with the exquisitely concocted new ways in which food has come to be prepared by imported French and Italian chefs on the other. While he fully appreciates the gustatory effect achieved by the fancy sauces, he is plainly aghast at the amount of perfectly good food that has to be wasted in order to make them. He solves his dilemma by letting loose his innate penchant for sarcasm and exaggeration, mocking the new cuisine while still granting it its superior taste. Ever practical and with an eye for expenditure, he carefully chronicles how much the different ranks of cook were paid.

O.E.S.

As soon as French chefs had wormed their way into Poland, and our own countrymen had themselves perfected the art of cooking, traditional dishes disappeared, and more elegant ones appeared in their place, such as: ruddy soups,²⁷⁵ cream soups, delicate broths, meals composed of various meats, and the most delicious of patés. Seasonings were no longer to be bought at the spice store; instead, spirits, essences, and expensive oils adding aroma and taste, titillating the appetite, were acquired at a drug store. Blackened goose went out of fashion; it was no longer served other than at wakes or in provincial houses; and if it ever did appear on the table, it got its color not from burnt straw but from gingerbread,²⁷⁶ after adding lemon instead of vinegar, along with sugar and cloves. Honey straight from the comb was removed from all no-

²⁷⁵ *zupa rumiana* (ruddy soup): a thick, rich, and spicy soup using rye bread as a base.

²⁷⁶ Dried gingerbread was, and sometimes still is, used as a flavoring.

ble and gentry kitchens, to be replaced with sugar. Lemons by now were commonplace and, whereas vinegar had been used heretofore, sour sauces were now made with lemon. If a bit of vinegar was added out of thrift, it was wine vinegar only, and in small amounts. No cook was considered any good if he cooked without lemons.

Pistachios and pine nuts went out of fashion, to be replaced by capers, olives, sprats, potatoes,²⁷⁷ and marinated oysters. Wine also began to be used in cooking, especially for foods demanding a tart sauce. It was especially used for fish dishes, which were slowly gaining the reputation of being bad for the health, their innate moisture being said to cause phlegm to rise. Never mind that Poles of old were more robust than today's, and had more vitality, even though they ate fish boiled in water. Among the more refined lords, fresh salmon was cooked in pure burgundy wine, but to tell the truth it was no better than if it had been cooked in water, unless possibly in one's imagination. It was nothing for cooks in the great houses to run through fifty or sixty lemons at a single meal served to several dozen people, whereas in the old days a couple of them would have sufficed. For every lemon the cook said he needed for a dish, he would put two into his pocket. The same with wine: one part for the dish, and two parts down the gullet of the cook. And when the cook called for wine, he was telling the truth when he said he needed it for the tongue—but for his own, not for the tongue of beef. And were he to be denied anything he requested, he would ruin the dish on purpose, pretending that he didn't have the proper ingredients needed to season it.

Except for plain pieces of meat, which were cooked in water with parsley and salt, all other dishes were covered with gravy made from meats of all kinds. In the language of the kitchen this sauce was called *alabrys*,²⁷⁸ and it was made this way: Taking a huge stock pot, which is found in every kitchen, the cook would place an entire leg of beef from which the meat would have been mostly shaved off and chopped into pieces. If the dinner were large, he would add another leg of beef, along with a quarter of veal, a quarter of lamb, a couple of capons, a large dollop of unsalted lard, parsley, celery, leeks, and carrots, and all of that would be left to boil in the pot

²⁷⁷ Potatoes first appeared in Poland as a novelty at the royal table; see the chapter "On the Potato."

²⁷⁸ *alabrys*, from French à la braise.

until all of the meat came off the bones. This sauce would be poured over dishes prepared separately, to be seasoned with various condiments such as those mentioned above, and with salt.

Another creation was stuffing, a finely chopped mash made of beef tallow, veal, capons, bread crumbs, eggs, butter, nutmeg, pepper, ginger, and other spices. The stuffing was used to stuff breast of veal, mutton, suckling pig, capons, and force-fed chickens—so-called poulardes. Suffice it to say that so little of the meat and fowl that went into the kitchen ever made it onto the table that what the cooks went through in making sauces and stuffing would have been enough in the olden days for a sumptuous meal on its own.

Gone were the large deep platters of former times, their place taken by small, round, flat ones. Salad servers became even smaller, and bowls were used only for serving large roasts and chops or larger fowl: geese, turkey, and grouse. It would have been the height of indelicacy to place two roasts or two turkeys on the same platter. Platters were not overloaded, in the belief that too much of a dish spoils the appetite. Only as much was set out as was needed for the dish to touch bottom, so that a single chicken, a couple of pullets, or two pheasants would be enough for a platter all by themselves. No care was paid to the matter of whether there was enough of each dish for everyone to eat. Given the sheer number of serving dishes laid out—as many as sixty or more for a single course—moderation in the size of portions was its own reward. When all the broths, soups, roasts, and pieces of meat were set out in such abundance, there was still enough for everyone to take a bite. For, along with the newer dishes, rather than eat some of this and that, it became the fashion for guests not to take too much of anything, but just a taste. In deference to such fashion it could happen that a person with a hearty appetite could get up from the table hungry, which happened most often to members of the fairer sex and to Frenchified *gallants*.

In drawing this discussion of new-style dishes to a close, one must mention that in order to demonstrate perfection in their art, the leading cooks would cleverly remove the meat from the bones of a capon, duck, or roe deer from the inside, leaving the outside untouched. Chopping up the meat and seasoning it with various spices, they would place it back in its original skin and, by rearranging the legs, wings and heads in var-

ious fantastic ways, they would produce figures unknown to God's original creation. These were considered to be the most fashionable and tasteful dishes of all.

Fish dishes were treated the same as meat: half of the fish would be boiled in the pot for seasoning, along with the same sort of greenery described above, and the rest of the fish would be cooked in it to be presented on the table; the result was exquisitely delicious. Some cooks, in order the better to put their talent on display, would cook fish in meat sauce, or lay a carp on a bed of lard, but in secret, and served in such a way that it could not be detected. Nevertheless, it was more often the case that the effect achieved by adding fish broth to the fish that was to appear whole upon the table would be tastier than fish flavored with meat sauce or lard.

French pastries, layer cakes, pasties,²⁷⁹ sponge cakes, and the like—doughnuts even²⁸⁰—were brought to the highest level of perfection. If an old-fashioned doughnut were to hit you in the face, you could get a black eye from it. But the new doughnuts were so plump and light that you could squeeze them in your hand and they would swell and ooze²⁸¹ like a sponge, so light that a mere puff of wind might whisk them off the plate.

Before dinners at which meat was to be served, one or more raw her-
ring would be set out on the table, of which the lords would take a fillet or two before each dish for whetting the appetite. They were advised to do so by doctors who, expecting that gluttony would lead to disease, advised their patients to do whatever they could to ruin their health, so as to have someone to treat.

Formerly, a good salary for a cook in a noble house would be three hundred tynfs a year, which comes to 380 in today's currency, and he was both oven and stove-top cook. However, later on the profession rose in value, so that a good cook, freed from any other obligations, would have to be paid at least five or six red złotych per month, or as much as eight for a truly gifted one.

279 In Polish, *paszтет*, which in Kitowicz's day seemingly meant both paté or pasty (small meat pie), and he seems to use the word in either sense from one place to another. In contemporary Polish, the diminutive *pasztecik* is most often used in the latter meaning.

280 The Polish *paczek*, or doughnut, is of the cream- or jelly-filled variety.

281 Kitowicz commits a rare, for him, pun here, using the verb *pęcznieć* (to swell, to bud) to describe the consistency of a squeezed *paczek*, whose name is the diminutive of *pak* (bud).

In addition, divisions opened up among cooks. Some of them were hot-dish chefs exclusively; they were the most expensive. Others were for oven-baked fare, and they were the least expensive. The latter were called *paté* masters, but their remit was not limited to that exclusively, but to anything coming out of the oven, for example: cakes, pastries, beans, meats, and game, in other words, anything whose preparation did not take place in a saucepan or on a spit but in the oven. And then there were Polish lords returning from foreign climes who brought back with them so-called master-chefs, responsible for overseeing the rest. These master-chefs were not plentiful among the lower nobility, but could be found only rarely, in the most extravagantly run kitchens, where excess followed upon excess. A master-chef earned around twelve ducats per month. In accepting service, he stipulated in advance that he did not belong to the ordinary kitchen staff but was only responsible for as many dishes as he was contracted for, half a dozen at the most, and only for the lord of the manor. When the lord was not at table, the master-chef did not so much as peek into the kitchen, where dinner for the other members of the household or the lord's family was being prepared. Sending to the kitchen for his own portion of the meal to be brought to him, he would sit and wait at home or take a leisurely stroll. The master-chef had to have everything he needed for the meal already assembled in readiness in front of him, so that all he had to do was put something in a pot, take it out again, and put it on a platter. Moistening his finger in the sauce and tasting it, he would proclaim: "*Bon sauce*," a trick ordinary cooks also employed as they laid their food out on the table, in such manner recommending some particular dish and directing one's attention to it.

The serving dishes set out on the table were collected one by one from the table, sliced on the sideboard and served around the table by *haiduks* and lackeys, so that no one had the need to reach for a platter across another person, nor to ask someone to pass anything.

Our Poles, not wanting to lag behind the Italians and the French, slowly became accustomed to and, in the end, turned into the best consumers of, specialty insects and crawling creatures, at the sight of which our ancestors would have recoiled and been disgusted and would have considered unsanitary. They ate frogs, turtles, oysters, snails, and *granele* (which are the testicles of young sheep and yearling calves), as well as

coxcombs and pheasant feet (their toes being singed over a tallow candle: only the imagination could have added any flavor to them); not to mention salads, pickles, mustards, and other raw products presented to the table to enhance the meat and roasts. These were not added in the kitchen, but staged on the side board, to be served together with the meat, and they were placed on the table along with it.





NOBLE TABLES AND BANQUETS

In this description of the gradual spread of social refinement among Polish nobility at table, we see a typical side of Kitowicz. His minute cataloguing of tableware, porcelain, and silverware, in a narrative interspersed with ironic side comments and an anecdote poking fun at country simpletons and priests, shows his appreciation for the reality that, although not all readers will care as much about place settings as he does, they will still enjoy a good story. As a whole, the text provides a simultaneously informative and humorous glimpse at dining etiquette among the Polish upper crust during the middle part of the reign of August III, including the introduction to high society of the toothpick.

O.E.S.

Both at home and in public places, gentlemen were enamored of laying out sumptuous tables. They would give one another public banquets and suppers, to which they would invite their friends, acquaintances, military officers, and members of the judiciary. Closest friends would gather in each other's homes. Rare was the day without a guest, and frequent the nights with dances and drinking. Throughout the country, other than for a handful of those more temperate in drink, life tended toward merriment and carousing. Tables amongst the gentry were set with enormous bowls. Among the great lords these bowls would be of silver, while among the lesser gentry, except for the tureens and silverware, they would be of pewter. The platters, likewise, would be either of silver or pewter, according to the gentleman's resources.

Beginning in the middle of August III's reign, faience pottery²⁸² appeared, and later porcelain, until the entire table setting among the ma-

²⁸² Faience pottery was a decorated tin-glazed pottery originally produced in Faenza, Italy, but by the eighteenth century it was produced throughout Europe. The familiar blue and white Delftware from Holland is a kind of faience pottery.

jor gentry consisted of porcelain: soup tureens, platters, soup bowls, salad bowls, plates, saucers, salt cellars, cruets, even the handles of knives and forks were porcelain. However, because at that time that material was more expensive than silver and, besides, more susceptible to breaking, it was used only very sparingly, on special occasions. Spoons for dining were normally of silver. However, on some estates, either less elegant or less prosperous, or among such gentlemen as were used to opening their tables to people whom they might not know, in the middle of the table, where distinguished persons would be seated, silver spoons and plates were laid and, according to the evolving fashion, either faience or porcelain, while at the ends of the table, where people would squeeze in and sit as best they could, tin or pewter spoons were placed, and plates likewise. Knives and forks were not served at the ends of the table, for at the beginning of the reign of August III the custom was in fashion for the nobility and members of society, and even many members of the noble household, to carry a knife with them on their belt, some with forks and others without, while others, besides a knife and fork, would have strapped to their belt a silver, horn, or wooden spoon—if wooden, then made of yew, boxwood, or spindle wood—the spoon being carried in a leather cover, sometimes embroidered with silver. In addition, it was the custom to place a supply of knives, forks, and spoons in the center of the table, understanding that those sitting at the end of the table would have their own knives and spoons for the lord's roast, soup, as well as other items. If, however, someone at table had neither the host's spoon nor his own, he borrowed one from another person as soon as that person, having finished off the thin stuff, went on to something more substantial. Either that or he made himself a spoon out of a crust of bread, stabbing it with his knife, which was not considered to be any kind of breach of etiquette in an age not yet infected or, better said, polished, by French refinement.

Napkins and a change of plates after each dish had not yet caught on, and when they did, they were used only at the center of the table and not at the ends, at which diners made do with a single plate. And when the plate became full of gristle and bones, they would hand it to a servant for him to throw the bones into a corner and clean it up somehow or, not having a servant at hand, they themselves would discretely toss the remnants under the table, thus freeing it up for more food after wiping it clean with a crust of bread.

There is, in this regard, a tale, or perhaps even a real-life occurrence, in which a certain Dominican priest, when invited to a banquet, instructed his servant-boy, taken straight from the country, to sit near the table and wipe his plate perfectly clean for him after each dish. When the priest sat down to table he made sure to see that his scapular²⁸³ hung out loosely behind him so that it would not be crushed by his sitting on it. The boy understood that the piece hanging behind his master was for cleaning the plates, and after each course he would wipe the plate off with the part of the scapular hanging down in back. Once it had gotten quite soiled and greasy, he admonished the Dominican, saying, "Master, turn the towel around from front to back, because this end has already gotten completely dirty."

If a person did not receive a napkin, he could make do with his handkerchief, even if it was sometimes tobacco-stained, and it did not bother the host or his fellow banqueters a bit. People would drink from a single glass or cup, taking turns, without any sense of disgust over the drops of liquid falling back into the cup off the mustache of one person as he handed it to the next. Even members of the fairer sex felt no revulsion at touching their delicate lips to a cup being passed around that had been wiped with somebody's mustache. However, once glass goblets and cups appeared on the scene, disgust at another person's lips arrived soon thereafter. Whenever a person drained a goblet, before passing it on to another he would wipe it clean with a napkin and, as a further sign of increasing civility, it would be rinsed out with water standing on a sideboard after each person had drunk from it. By contrast, small wine glasses would be set out individually before each person along with a bottle of wine and water with a glass for it, also for each person. If someone requested beer, it would be carried around the table in glasses to those seated.

However, once the fashion was so established, plates would be laid along the entire table from one end to the other, along with napkins, knives, and forks; and plates would be exchanged after each dish, and sometimes even forks, rinsing them with water. There were separate large spoons for taking food from tureens and platters, and separate knives and

283 A scapular is a long piece of material worn by priests over the shoulders, hanging down both in front and back. This anecdote is seemingly illustrated in Aleksander Orłowski's painting "Feast at the Radziwills." See Figure 5.

forks for slicing roasts. Finally, lest there be no lack of refinement, at each setting would be placed several boxwood splinters, thin and sharply whittled, for picking one's teeth. They could be bought from a Nuremberg merchant²⁸⁴ at two tymfs for sixty, which is the same as two złotys today, or sixteen copper groschen.²⁸⁵ Each person was free to take these tiny splinters of wood, or toothpicks, as they were called, for a utensil; officially they were called needles, owing to their similarity to that instrument. At a large table with several dozen people as many as sixty or even twice as many might be used.²⁸⁶ New ones would be bought for every public dinner, since some guests would have demolished them, while others would have been cleared off the table by servants little caring for the insignificant cost to their masters of such trifles, to be dispersed and used up among themselves, since there would never be any question as to their disappearance.

Liveried servants were employed at table for serving and removing plates, which they would do through a napkin, lest the graceless bare hand of a lackey or haiduk cause offense to someone's sensitivity. The master of the kitchen and lackeys would apply the same method when setting out dishes on the table and distributing the food.



284 So-called *towar nurymburski* (Nuremberg goods) refers to cheap haberdashery and sundries (thread, lace, ribbons, etc.) sold in shops whose goods were often imported from Nuremberg.

285 Although today there are one hundred groschen to a złoty, the number varied over the centuries. In Saxon times over a dozen coin designations were in use, and there were thirty groschen to a złoty.

286 The author uses *kopa* (sixty-count) to count toothpicks.



ON THE POTATO

Much in this delightful brief treatise on the potato is misinformed, not to mention ethnically prejudiced. Germans will no doubt be amused to learn that they prefer their game half rotten. Tacitus never knew the potato, and potatoes were introduced to Poland much earlier than Kitowicz surmises, although they did gain popularity during August III's reign. The first ones appeared at the table of king Jan Sobieski (ruled 1674–1696). The “tubers” mentioned as preceding the potato actually did not arrive much earlier. Commonly known as Jerusalem artichokes, like the potato they too were introduced to Europe from North America, by the early 1700s arriving in Poland, where they now thrive as an invasive weed throughout the country. Students of Polish literature reading this text may be reminded of Adam Mickiewicz’s (1798–1856) mock-epic poem “Kartofla” (The Potato), according to which the Gods, after lengthy discussion, finally decide to allow Columbus to discover America—the weight of a potato tipping the balance in his favor.

O.E.S.

Tacitus writes that the main food of the ancient Germans was *poma agrestia* and *recens fera* (ground apples and fresh game),²⁸⁷ and the taste for such sustenance continues among today’s Germans: it is their specialty, with the sole difference being that the ancient Germans were fond of fresh game (as Tacitus calls it, *recens fera*), whereas today’s Germans prefer game that is past its prime, when it has already begun to puff up, and the breasts of fowl have begun to take on a greenish tint. Ground apples—*ziemniaki* or, as they are now called, *kartofle*²⁸⁸—wheth-

287 Kitowicz mistakenly identifies the word *poma* with the potato, a vegetable obviously unknown to Tacitus (56–117 AD), for they had not yet been imported to Europe from the New World.

288 The names *ziemniaki* (Polish) and *kartofle* (borrowed from German) still compete with one another as the word for “potato.” To an extent, they are regionally differentiated.

er fresh or old, remain the same over time and cause the same satisfaction to the appetite.

Having related their background, I will now proceed to discuss when and where potatoes first arrived in Poland, for they first appeared on the royal properties of August III, on which they had been planted by German—that is, Saxon—estate managers who, for their own comfort and convenience, had brought this fruit with them from Saxony and propagated it.

For a long time Poles looked down on potatoes, considering them to be harmful to the health.²⁸⁹ Certain priests even tried to spread among the common folk the idea (not that they themselves believed it) that even if people should become accustomed to the German taste for potatoes, they must not make flour out of it or sell it as being the same as wheat flour, as if those making contributions of flour to the altar, even if it were only wheat flour mixed with potato flour, would be committing an act of sacrilege.

Slowly the farmers on royal landholdings began to acquire potatoes from the Germans, and from them they were adopted by neighboring farmers. Finally, when potatoes became known throughout the Żuławy region below Gdańsk²⁹⁰ and among the Hollanders²⁹¹ in Greater Poland and Lithuania, and when several hundred Swabian families arrived in Greater Poland (with whom certain landowners, especially around Poznań, after having driven out the former Polish peasants, populated entire villages),²⁹² these newcomers who, in their own country, had learned to live almost exclusively on potatoes, encouraged first the Polish peasants and, after them, the nobility to develop a taste for them, so that by the end of the reign of August III potatoes became common throughout Poland, Lithuania, and Ruthenia.

289 Indeed, the leaves and stems of potatoes can be poisonous, as are uncooked green potatoes.

290 The region along the left bank of the outlet of the Vistula below Gdańsk.

291 In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Mennonite settlers from Holland established villages along the Baltic seacoast.

292 Kitowicz is referring to the so-called *Bambrzy* or *Bamberzy* (Bambergers), settlers from Swabia to the Poznań area who, unlike what Kitowicz says, were brought to Poland in 1719–1753 in order to occupy Polish villages decimated by war and cholera. Relatively small in number, the Bambergers were resented for being given concessions in preference to Polish peasants, helping many Bambergers to become quite prosperous. The word still exists as a pejorative designation for a rich foreign farmer, and Bamberg cultural organizations are still active around Poznań.

Before potatoes were known, people consumed tubers. It is a fruit similar to potatoes with the difference that it is much larger: under a single stalk as many as forty or fifty bulbs may be found, bound together in the shape of a skein of wool by shoots as thin as thread. They taste the same as potatoes, but they have a frightful smell, like that of a stinkbug.²⁹³ The stalk of a tuber is an inch thick and can be one-and-a-half times as tall as a man. As potatoes became widely disseminated, the cultivation of tubers was abandoned.



²⁹³ The author uses the word *pluskwa*, contemporarily “bedbug,” but it seems possible that “stinkbug” is meant.



OF BEDS AND BEDDING

The reader searching this brief text for bedroom titillation will probably be disappointed. Like the chapter on table settings ("Noble Tables and Banquets"), the present one, loaded with sarcasm, chronicles the increasing refinement of society under the reign of August III—here in the area of bedroom accoutrements, a subject that Kitowicz uses to drum on his theme of how Poles are growing softer from one generation to the next. Even before the discovery of germs, Poles are learning to recoil with disgust at the idea of contact with another person's slept-on bed-linen. One matter of interest is how the bedding arrangements in the earlier part of the eighteenth century, relying on tapczans, or day-beds, and koldry (feather quilts encased in a slip cover) are still those widely used in present-day Poland—except for nocniki (bedpans), of course. Kitowicz, conscious of the humor, uses the word stolec (throne, stool sample) at the end to describe the folding toilets some people brought along with them when visiting, this apparently being their colloquial name.

O.E.S.

In the greater houses, the marital bed would be covered in damask²⁹⁴ of the same color as the wall-covering of the room in which it stood. Its shape would be that of a hospital bed, with drawn curtains at both top and bottom, richly trimmed in gold lace. Such beds were placed with their head to the wall and their foot into the center of the room. In a palatial residence there would be several such beds, always accommodated to the rooms. As for a bachelor's or a maiden's bed, for a long time no kind was known other than a daybed²⁹⁵ with mattress. A bachelor would

²⁹⁴ Damask is a patterned fabric of cotton, silk, or linen with the design woven into the fabric.

²⁹⁵ The *tapczan* (daybed), devoid of the weaponry displayed over it, but still with a tapestry (a *kilim*) above it to protect the wall, is still probably the most commonly used bed in an ordinary Polish house or apartment. There are many designs, but in its basic form it is a backless couch with

cover his daybed with a Turkish carpet, and on the wall behind it would be a tapestry on which he would hang rows of broadswords, pistols, rifles, powder horns, cartridge carriers ... and on the floor next to the daybed would be spread a bearskin rug. Such would be the bed on public display for every young bachelor, lord, courtier, military man, or member of the bar. The bedding itself would consist of a couple of pillows, sheets, quilts, and a mattress, stuffed with straw, hay, or cut grass. They knew nothing of feather beds, whether above or below. And whenever some coddled youth arrived at a manse bringing with him feather bedding of the sort just described, he would be ridiculed and have to send it back home and content himself with a quilt and pillows.

A young lady's bedding consisted of pillows, an under-blanket of feathers, sheets, and quilts which, as with bachelors, was of stitched cotton fabric, usually in Chinese crimson, although they could be of different colors, and of various fabric.

A marital bed was covered during the day with a thin counterpane, not stitched, of the same material as the curtains and other decorations, and beneath the cover, taken off for the night, was a thick feather comforter filled with down, in a cloth casing of thin white fabric, for covering the sleeping couple and keeping them warm.

From the middle of the reign of August III, comforts and amenities unknown to former Poles—under-blankets, feather blankets, and quilted down comforters—began to be used among young lords and then to spread to other youth in general, and all the more to those of advanced and old age until, custom having been turned on its head, it became a disgrace for a courtier, lawyer, cavalryman, or armored soldier not to be suitably outfitted with bedding: under-blankets, a comforter, pillows beribboned with piping, and a night-cap, which is a silk cap for night-time wear, embroidered with patterns of silver and gold. The nightcap was typically a gift to a young man from a lady, or to a brother from a sister, or to a male relative from a female one (say, a nun in a cloister). Various types of beds arrived on the scene along with the comforters, taking the place of daybeds, which from then on became the sleeping accommodation used ex-

a compartment where bedding is kept during the day, and into which the decorative carpet covering it is either tucked away at night or used as an under-blanket.

clusively by servants, lackeys, and staff. Not only did permanent beds arrive, but also travelling fold-up ones, which delicate gentlemen and young lords hauled with them wherever they went, along with their bedding, recoiling at the idea of sleeping on a straw mattress in a flea-ridden tavern or in another's house on another person's bedding that could have been previously crumpled and used for who knows what perversion and by whom; which in a sense was also better for the host, who, before such fashion had arrived, at times had to deprive himself, his wife, and his children of their own bedding in consideration of their numerous guests.

Finally, lest nothing of comfort go lacking, urinals for each guest would be placed beneath the bed, something that in earlier ages was unknown. Some people even carried with them foldable stools, so that, after satisfying one's needs, the folded stool, locked up tight, had the appearance of some kind of large book.





ON NOBLE PALACES AND HOMES

Polish manor houses, lived in by the nobility in the countryside, once numbered in the tens of thousands and were especially numerous in the eastern territories of Ukraine and Lithuania. By now they have all but disappeared, having fallen into ruin either of their own accord or, under communism, having been expropriated and run into the ground as collective-farm buildings. Whether modest or designed on a grander scale, they tended to be built according to a set formula: symmetrical with a nearly obligatory central portico leading to a hall with large rooms on either side, opening onto smaller rooms set in the corners. The current text discusses both modest manor houses and the palatial residences of the wealthy nobility, including the arrival on the scene of wallpaper and the adoption in wealthier homes of waxed floors, both of which developments Kitorwicz views with skepticism, for more-or-less opposite reasons. He looks down on wallpaper for allowing a "nobleman of a single village" to decorate his house in style, while simultaneously disapproving of the extravagance involved on the part of the rich in keeping a parquet floor constantly waxed and polished. Overall, he projects here his ingrained conservatism, as he repeatedly castigates the younger generation for not leaving well enough alone but always having to replace the old with the new—inevitably at the expense of quality and durability. For humorous effect, the author does not neglect to describe in graphic detail the consequences of the sleeping arrangements that came about in country homes when a large number of guests had to stay overnight.

O.E.S.

Old-fashioned noble palaces, made of stone, passed down by great-grandfathers to grand-children and great-grand-children with little alteration or repair, may still be seen here and there in the form in which they were originally created centuries ago. For a long time,

one never saw old palaces let go to ruin or be torn down and new ones put up in their place. One lived in them in the same state they were in when one took them over from one's father, with no need for excess and little concern for comfort. Stone palaces and castles typically consisted of two stories, only infrequently of three. Their interior layout would be: a portico, an entrance hall, large rooms with high ceilings, with smaller rooms, alcoves, powder rooms, little chapels, and strong-rooms set in the corners. When a large number of guests arrived for a house-party, several families would be put up for the night in a single large room separated one from another by screens, which also partitioned off strangers of either sex from one another. Day-beds of the sort described earlier would be brought in, and if there were not enough of them to go around, straw would be laid on the floor and covered with assorted bed-linen and people would sleep stacked up one next to another, men by men and women by women.

This was not an altogether satisfactory arrangement, inasmuch as gluttony and over-drinking would lead to incidents offending both nose and decency—for example, when a man with an over-full stomach and wrapped in slumber was unable to make it to the door in time and unloaded his burden of nature among the sleeping guests sprinkling them with his unperfumed water. Or a man, having spied for himself in the light of day a worthy prize for his desires, would search for her in the dark and, coming upon her, provided she remained silent, would quietly debauch her: a wife next to her snoring husband, or a daughter next to her mother. Should the startled maiden instead put up a fuss, he himself would raise a racket and wake up the entire company, claiming that she must have mistaken him for the ghost of a man who had led a wanton life, for in those days, especially among women, beliefs ran rife about wandering souls doing penance. The habit of placing urinals next to guest beds had not yet caught on, so whoever had a thread of decency took his bodily needs out of doors, even in the bitterest frost and at the risk of catching cold, but a person not wishing to expose himself to such unpleasantness would urinate in the fireplace, the characteristic sizzle rousing more than one person from his or her slumber in fright.

Walls in noble homes were covered either with tapestries or with loom-made fabric, damask being the fanciest, all the more so when thickly embroidered with golden piping. Damask as a wall covering came in four different colors: carmine, green, yellow, and light blue, and whatever

the color of the walls, that was also the color of the curtains on the windows, usually made of taffeta, as well as of the upholstery on the chairs and settees—all would be of one color, and from that the room would take its name, for example: the yellow room, the green room, and so on.

Tables set up for games were of no special shape, but made of plain lumber and covered with carpets of various sort: Turkish, Persian, shaggy, smooth, silk, or wool, gold- and silver-embroidered or not; or they could be of cloth sewn with flowers and other figures, with a silk fringe all around. After a meal was over, dining tables would either be removed to the hall or pushed up against the wall and covered with a large Turkish carpet or smooth fabric with a fringe.

Some lords kept a large orchestra, for which benches were set up in one corner of the room, upholstered in red fabric or left bare; or they would play from a gallery placed high up under the ceiling. Others, who had a chamber orchestra, would situate it in a room next to the main one, from where the melody wafted out to those seated at tables or dancing.

The manor houses of both lesser lords and the wealthy nobility were for the most part built of wood and were of one or two stories, enhanced on the outside by decorations, galleries, porticos, and porches, although that pattern was not universal. Others were built in a simple square or quadrangle, like a barn or shed. As for the interior layout, almost all were the same, both noble palaces and manor houses, as described above. If the building were large, whether wooden or stone, it was called a palace, especially if it had outbuildings to go with it. If it didn't, and if in addition it was modest in size, it was called either a *dwór* or *dworek*, depending on size. However, if it was built of stone and if, in addition, it was placed on a hillock surrounded by a ditch filled with water and circled by ramparts, it took on the name of "castle."

The living accommodations of the petty gentry did not differ from peasant cottages and, like them, they were often sheathed in sheaves of straw,²⁹⁶ a difference being that a nobleman's house obligatorily had a tall gate in front of it, even if the rest of the yard was surrounded by nothing but a hedge. Another difference was that a nobleman's manor house had two large rooms on either side and a hall in the middle, whereas a peasant cottage had the hall

296 For insulation.

in front, a room behind it, and a pantry in the rear. But this difference between noble manors and peasant cottages held only in Mazuria, for in the provinces of Greater Poland the peasants, village elders, and Dutch settlers have more stately residences than the petty nobility in Mazovia.

Whatever I have written about wall coverings and other decorations in the palaces of the great lords can also be said for the wealthy nobility, but among the lesser nobility it was enough to have one or two rooms decked out, along with the chairs and sofas, leaving the rest of the rooms plain and provided with simple benches for sitting.

Beginning with the middle of August III's reign, when it became the universal fashion to send the sons of the aristocracy and nobility abroad straight from school for them to acquire polish and good taste, an aversion arose among the entire population toward old structures and furniture, or what we call chattel. As soon as a young lord became master of the property following the death of his father, his first order of business was to redecorate according to the latest fashion the style of the palace, castle, or manor house he had inherited from his forebears, or to completely demolish it and put up a new and prettier one, even if less solidly built, in its place. From that time on builders of stone palaces rivalling in style and decoration those in foreign countries flourished. Old-fashioned furniture, too, upholstered in the damask of old, was tossed aside in favor of lighter brocade, similar to damask but cheaper, and therefore within the reach even of a nobleman of a single village; but this too was soon abandoned, as fabric painted with flowers and other figures came into fashion, adding a touch of shoddy gaiety at the expense of sturdy durability. Eventually paper wall-covering came on the scene, looking similar to and being less expensive than fabric, and toward the end of the king's reign a cubit's length of wallpaper could be had for as little as a single zloty, as the result of which not only lordly rooms, but even those of the lesser nobility used it, until at last one could not find the walls of any home of any reasonably affluent merchant or parish priest not covered in wallpaper.

However, the aristocracy, as always looking down on anything that has become commonplace, and wanting to have whatever is latest, developed a liking for Italian fresco, which is achieved by painting on a freshly plastered wall, whose value derives from the skilled hand of the artist as opposed to an inferior one. Now it cost as much to paint a single room

as it had formerly cost to buy damask for an entire palace and hand it over in that state to one's grandchildren. And since such painting can only be done with water-soluble paints, which before long begin to flake off, after only a few years the fashion-conscious lord becomes tired of it and develops an appetite for painting over it, wasting his original investment and necessitating a new outlay of expense. Add to this the decorative painting of the plasterwork and the gilding of the molding, cornices, and wainscoting, which is wooden paneling around the bottom of a wall. Next came reflecting mirrors set in richly gold-plated bronze frames and hung about the walls with crystal candelabra, along with large mirrors set over vanity tables for checking on one's appearance, also elegantly framed. In addition to wall mirrors, enormous crystal mirrors would hang from the ceiling along with a dozen or more candles which, when lit, made the richly adorned room appear to be on fire from all the light.

At this time in place of the old plain-board floors, or at most parquet floors made at a carpenter's shop and kept clean of mud and dust with the help of water and a rag, there came into fashion flooring made of the same parquet, but now waxed, not washed, and which were slippery as ice to walk across. When such floors became scuffed, they were first washed with warm water and soap, since water by itself does not dissolve the wax, and then the floor was waxed again. Great lords had lads on staff called waxers, whose duties consisted solely of washing and waxing the floors. To be sure, during the reign of August III such waxed floors could be found only in the palaces of the great lords. In Puławy, I once saw a room whose ceiling, walls and floor were made entirely of mirrors.²⁹⁷

Furniture also underwent change, as the idea was conceived of covering chairs and sofas with embossed leather stamped with little gold flourishes. Then came wicker chairs woven in a checkered pattern with wooden frames and legs, followed by various kinds of fold-up tables, desks, secretaries, and wardrobes of various shape and size, some lacquered in Chinese varnish, others inlaid with ivory or wood of a different kind from the main

²⁹⁷ This sentence would be more logically placed at the end of the preceding paragraph. Puławy, located on the Vistula river in the western part of Lublin voivodeship, was the possession of the Czartoryski "familia" (see "On the Sejms") and the site of their most imposing palace. If this mirrored room ever actually existed, Kitowicz may be the only one to have given an account of it. It does not exist today.

piece, polished to the luster and smoothness of glass by applying nitric acid and rubbing it until hot with a rag, horsetail,²⁹⁸ and wood-shavings, after which it takes on a shine. Door-handles, drawer-pulls and other cabinet hardware would be of silver, bronze, or gold-plated brass. If a cabinet were as tall as a person and had elongated doors running from top to bottom it was called a *szafa* (wardrobe). If it were low, chest-high, or maybe slightly taller and had drawers layered one on top of the other, with locks for each individual drawer, it was called a *biurko* (bureau). If it was in the shape of a table on legs with a single drawer set in the top, closed by a slanting door that opened up horizontally to be supported by a leg that pulled out so that it could be used as a writing table, it was called a *kantorek* (secretary); older such cabinet-tables were called *pulpity* (writing desks).

Wardrobes, dressers, and secretaries did not change in shape all the way to the end of August's reign, since such furniture is very useful and decorative in a house and does not go out of fashion, but rather acquires increasing elegance over time. On the other hand, wickerwork sofas and chairs did not last for more than ten years, for three reasons: first because they were not strong; second, because for reason of an inadequate supply of wicker in our country they had to be imported from Gdańsk or somewhere else; and third, because they were hard to sit on. In order to alleviate the last shortcoming, pillows stuffed with hair were made for them and covered in either wool or cotton. But finally chairs and sofas made of wicker, being so weak that they frequently broke upon one's sitting down on them, followed by a thunderous crash bringing pain to the faller and disgrace to the host, were abandoned and replaced with sofas and chairs made in-country which were solid, since they could be custom-made for the individual sitting on them. Later came stools, or chairs without backs or sides, upholstered in horsehair and covered first with a coarse fabric and then overlaid with another material—whether wool, brocade, silk, or damask—but only with these finer fabrics and only in rooms for display. In other rooms, and in other nobles' houses, cotton slipcovers would be stretched over the tops of chairs, sofas, and stools, first covered with the coarse fabric just mentioned, and tied underneath, so that when they were soiled they could be removed for washing or repair without ruining the piece.

298 The plant *Equisetum arvense*, once used as an abrasive.

This last fashion, cheaper than silks and damasks, lasted after the rein of August III up through the next king and indeed lasts until the present day. However, in comparison with the bare benches and stools of former years, which at most were covered with fabric or with gray or black calfskin, it can be considered an excess; for cotton quickly becomes soiled and ripped, and so in place of the torn cloth a new slipcover has to be procured and a new cost has to be borne, which Poles of old, who preserved their furnished rooms over the centuries in the same state of decoration, to be handed down intact from fathers to sons, did not know.

Whatever I have written about the furniture in noble palaces, all of it can be applied in equal measure to the manor houses and homes of the nobility, as well as to those of rich burghers—mainly merchants in Warsaw—who did not yield superiority in indulging in excess to anyone, for which reason they often went bankrupt. All of them focused on decorating their living quarters as best as they possibly could. More than one nobleman of greater or lesser fortune, especially one who had taken for himself a wife raised in the French fashion, spent a fortune on building an elegantly walled and appointed palace, together with laying out an Italian garden, a greenhouse, and other such extravagances. And when from his ancestral villages, which in no way reflected the grandeur of his palace, he selected youths for lackeys, haiduks, waxers, gardeners, and other such freeloaders, and when the gardener, for his own upkeep and for keeping his minions in order, every summer took for himself an increasingly larger proportion of the workers, and when all of the best fertilizer went on flower beds, melons, cucumbers, and lettuce, it was natural that such an enterprise would start to flag and its profit to wane, and its expenses and debt to accumulate, not leaving the wherewithal to pay for it until it was no longer possible to escape the importunities of one's creditors. In the end, when a lord, attached to his property by law,²⁹⁹ cared more for the tulips and landscape paintings in his rooms than he did about the grain in his fields, he would be chased out of his palace and mortgaged estate, and that palace, along with its elegantly designed Italianate garden would begin to spoil and go into decline, until at last everything would fall into utter ruin.

²⁹⁹ According to the principle of ordinacy; see note 82.



ON COSTUME OR DRESS

This long chapter (and we have omitted some of it) contains a description of men's wear at a time when the traditional old Polish Sarmatian fashion was yielding to modern European dress, or what Kitowicz describes as German-style. According to him, the transition was urged along by the decided preference of the "fairer sex" for the latter, as it suggested that the wearer had been educated abroad in the art of proper wooing.

The word Sarmatism used here derives from the fantastic myth that the Polish nobility was somehow descended from the Sarmatians, an ancient tribe inhabiting the lower Volga river. Exhibiting itself in oriental-inspired clothing and weaponry, its ideology was associated with the notion of Polish exceptionalism, a destiny as the defender of Roman Catholicism and, especially, an attachment to the so-called "golden freedoms" enjoyed by them, including the equality of all nobles before the law (and their preferential treatment compared to others) in social, judicial, and political matters, the right to elect kings, and the individual right to scuttle legislation (the infamous liberum veto; see "On the Sejms").

In practice, the possession and carrying of a saber, a prized family heirloom, was also considered a prerogative of the nobility (and of rabble-rousers). The fastidious attention devoted to weapons, bladed and otherwise, makes one consider how potentially dangerous it may have been to walk abroad in the middle of the Polish eighteenth century, as one seemingly had to be ready to defend oneself against insult or assault at any moment. The Polish preference for the cavalry saber as the dueling weapon of choice is alluded to here, its advantage being that blows from a saber were more apt than a rapier or a pistol (not to mention a war hammer) merely to maim and disarm one's opponent rather than kill him.

Almost as much attention as to weaponry is devoted to the oriental sash-belt, an obligatory component of a nobleman's wardrobe, often costing a fortune. The author devotes hardly less attention to boots, trousers, hairstyles, and the traditional Polish żupan and kontusz as they underwent change according to fashion during his lifetime, eventually evolving into the bekishe (Turkish-style coat), the kiereja (great-coat), and the delia (like the kiereja, but taken in at the waist). As one sees from the multiple references to the color crimson (or carmine), costly because of the expense of crimson dye, made from huge numbers of scale insects, clothing of this color was emblematic of the Polish higher nobility.

O.E.S.

At the beginning of August III's reign, very few nobles had adopted foreign dress, except for the house of the Czartoryskis, Lubomirskis, the Kraków voivode, and several others who, as early as during the reign of August II, had already adopted German dress. During August III's coronation, all of the Polish lords, without exception, were in Polish garb. But as soon as August III put that ceremony behind him, he returned to his native German dress, and the lords instantly reverted to the German fashion too. And not only did those who previously had followed the German style return to it, but others too more and more began to dress German-style, so that that toward the end of August III's reign barely a tenth of the senators and Crown officials were dressed in the Polish way. By the end, half of the country was dressed German-style. At all public convocations, one was faced with two nations: one Polish, and the other German.

German versus Polish Dress

Young people, especially those returning from abroad, sought some kind of distinction for themselves in foreign costume, although in certain company—for example at sejmiks—those German-style Poles would get their creases flattened only for reason of their dress, upon which partisans of Polish clothing looked askance; but such occasional occurrences did not

spoil the taste of young lords for things German, since as a reward they first of all found favor among the fairer sex. If two suitors of equal fortune and talent were able to offer themselves as a husband, without fail the maiden would choose the German and send the Pole packing. If her parents or guardians were choosing a husband for her, and they settled on a Pole, and she burst out in tears, then they lay the condition on him that he begin dressing German-style.

The fairer sex had two causes for being revolted by Polish dress, the first being that Poles going Polish-style, since they had not been polished abroad in the artifices of wooing the fairer sex (which was what young suitors brought back to the country as their greatest attribute), retained the manners of old-fashioned Sarmatism; secondly, anyone dressing Polish style obligatorily had to wear mustaches, and one could not shave them off without exposing oneself to ridicule; and nothing was quite as repulsive to the fairer sex as mustaches, especially when there were any number of suitors among those dressed foreign-style who did not wear mustaches, and who were just as powdered, curled, corseted, and perfumed as they were themselves. For it is universal in nature to like that which is similar to oneself.

Nevertheless, despite the universal taste, there were such heroines as considered it an act of bravery to give her hand to a Pole in marriage; but that was a very rare bird indeed. Having described the differences in dress and the circumstances attaching to them, I will now leave German or French dress at the tailor's. There may it hang until he modifies it to some other style. As for me, I will don my kontusz, and in it I will continue to entertain my Reader.

Żupans and Kontuszes

A żupan, kontusz, sash belt, pants or trousers, boots, and a cap—that was the entire extent of the public costume of a Pole, whether noble or burgher. A nobleman girded his kontusz with his sash. In winter, kontuszes were lined with some kind of light fur: ermine, dormouse,³⁰⁰ fox-fur, rab-

300 *dormouse*: an edible, squirrel-like rodent, sole representative of the species *Glis glis*, found throughout Europe.

bit, ground squirrel, marten, sable or, instead of lined kontuszes [a portion of the text here has been lost—O.E.S.].

A burgher belted himself around his żupan and draped his kontusz around his shoulders, fastening it below the neck with a thick silk gold or silver cord ending in tassels; hanging down in back it looked like a Roman cloak. A burgher thus attired carried a thick cane or walking stick tipped with a short brass ferrule, topped with a silver ball or a ball of coconut ringed with silver, beneath which ball a brass or silver grip would be fixed into the cane from which a tasseled cord or tape hung down. The tape would be of pure silk, or of silk worked with gold or silver, and it served as a sling. In this way the cane served the burgher as support, decoration, and weapon, for it was not suitable for burghers to carry a saber, other than for magistrates in Kraków, Poznań, or Wilno, who enjoyed such privilege of old.

A nobleman, as he left his house, strapped a saber to his side and carried a club in his hand, which also went by the name of a war hammer or horseman's pick, whose stock was about an inch in diameter and reached to a man's waist. At the holding end was a rounded oblong ball, either silver-plated or pure brass, while at the business end, at the bottom, was affixed to the cane an iron, brass, or silver hammer-head, flat on one side like a cobbler's hammer, while the other side was beaten into the shape of an axe. That was called a war axe,³⁰¹ but if the blade was thick, pointed, and slightly curved, it was called a war hammer; if it wound back on itself like a bread roll, it was just called a club.

The war hammer was a horrific weapon in the hands of a Pole if ever a person should be inclined to brawl or stir up trouble. A saber could lop off a man's arm, rip open his lip, or graze his head, after which the sight of an adversary's blood stemmed the flames of passion, but a cudgel could easily deliver a fatal blow without drawing any blood. Seeing no blood, a person forgets to have second thoughts and just hammers away, breaking ribs and smashing bones without leaving a mark. Such nobility as carried cudgels like this caused most harm to their own subjects, often even killing them—for which reason at all major gatherings, Sejms, sejmiks, tri-

³⁰¹ In Polish, the *czekan*, which looks like an ice-ax or alpenstock, similar to the *ciupaga* used by Tatra highlanders

bunals, or wherever fights were apt to break out, it was forbidden to show up with a war hammer. In the cathedral church in Gniezno, a sign hangs on the door, casting a curse on a person who dares to enter the house of God with such a weapon, more suitable for brigands.³⁰² It really was a brigand's instrument, for should one person strike another with it behind the ear, the fatal iron would go straight through one side of the skull and come out the other.

Sabers and Karabelas

A saber in August's days could take various shapes. A simple black saber, in other words, one with an iron hilt hanging on leather straps, was typically worn by the poorer gentry. Instead of horse- or mule-hide (these being the two kinds of leather in which sabers were normally sheathed) they would use eel-skin, which was no problem, for the iron hilt was all that mattered. Not only among the minor gentry, but also among the wealthiest lords, a saber was passed down from father to son, from son to grandson, and so on in succession along with the family's most precious jewels. The black saber was also carried by cardsharps, night-time rabble-rousers, and other miscreants whose greatest enjoyment was slicing open the smooth lip of some dandy or chasing some German through the mud in his white stockings. In general, the black saber was drawn in all circumstances of tumult and altercation, although those who dressed German-style had German swords and double-edged rapiers. Finally, the black saber served for dueling, and it was the weapon most often used for that purpose.

The old-fashioned black saber was curved, the best ones coming from foundries in Wyszyny. Its quality could be judged by bending it back almost to the hilt and seeing it spring back straight again. Later came straight sabers, made in Staszów, narrow and light like Spanish sabers, which did not weigh one down so much and served well for defense and for driving off unexpected assailants. The hilts of black sabers had an angular grip and a small ring, both of iron. The foot of the grip was called the cross-guard, and the ring, into which one inserted the thumb, was

³⁰² This sign, if it ever existed, is missing today.

called the thumb-hole. As time went on, and as Sejms and tribunals grew more tumultuous, grips were devised that covered the entire hand. Such a hand-protector was called a *furdymant*. It consisted of iron strips woven into a cage the size of one's hand. In proportion to the size of the cross-guard, scabbards became as wide as boards, and the fashion subsequently passed also to narrow sabers, even to ones that had no *furdymant*. It was the Lithuanians who thought up this short-lived fashion, thereafter taken up by people of the Crown. However, it must also have existed under the Roman Republic, for a Latin poet, I don't remember who, maybe Horace or Martial,³⁰³ wrote this epigram to a certain Ponticus: "*Grandi in vagina, Pontice, claudis acum*," which in Polish means, "You hide a tiny needle, Ponticus, in a big scabbard."³⁰⁴

Such sabers with large cross-guards and wide scabbards were mostly worn by courtiers, cardsharps, and ne'er-do-wells who like to initiate swordplay about bars and taverns, because they would fleece whomever they could get the better of; either that or, if the person was weak and had no heart for battle, he would just pay them off. In any case, when such a weapon, because of its size, began to ruin one's garment, it was quickly abandoned, especially as cruder and sterner customs began to yield to milder ones. For more festive costumes one would use Turkish or Tatar sabers, called *karabelas*;³⁰⁵ either that or small-swords with silver, gold, or pot-metal fittings. These last were called Lwów swords, since that was where most of them were made.

Sabers and *karabelas* were attached to the body in one of two ways. The older way was with wide leather straps with silver or gilded buckles and spangles at the end. These straps held the saber tight by one's side, so that the cross-guard was even with one's belt. The straps were wrapped around the left side and were cinched at the lower back, next to the spine. Sword-sashes were tied in the same way, the difference being that they

303 Marcus Valerius Martialis (ca. 38–102 AD), known for his books of epigrams. Martial, as he is known in English, lived about a hundred years after the lyric poet Horace (Quintus Horatius Flaccus, 65–8 BC).

304 Kitowicz's rhyming couplet in Polish preserves the Latin pun: "*W dużej pochwie Pontyka... Igielka się zamyka*." One gets the feeling that this entire discussion of wide scabbards was designed to lead up to this off-color shaggy-dog joke.

305 After the town Karbala, now in Iraq; see the portrait of Stanisław Antoni Szczuka (figure 7) for an example of a *karabela*.

were not of leather but of silk, sometimes of silk alone, sometimes interwoven with silver or golden thread. Courtiers, dandies, and young lords matched the sash for the saber or karabela to the župan, without worrying about matching the stripes to the župan's color.

Later came the fashion of fastening sabers down low, so that it hung below the knee, and when one walked, one either had to hold it by the cross-guard or carry it under one's arm, lest it get tangled between the legs and trip one up. To support this, the straps or sword-sashes went over the person's back, just like the harness on a carriage horse. This fashion, both silly-looking and uncomfortable, did not last longer than five or six years, after which it was abandoned, as people returned to the short and narrow means of fastening them, which took up no space in back but only on the side, where it was also not very comfortable, because the saber knocked against a person's side as he walked. Then came belts of silver and gold, thickly inlaid with pieces of cast silver or silver-gold. These were used only for small-swords. They were not suited for the black saber, with fittings of iron, nor for the karabela. In order to save wear on these straps, some people lined them with chamois, while others, loving ostentation and excess, did not line them with anything. When it became the fashion to carry a knife behind one's belt, wealthier people saw to it that its handle be of some kind of precious stone, or of ivory or horn encrusted with silver or gold. The knife's scabbard, commonly made of dark goatskin, would be decorated with white silver or gilded fittings, elaborately embroidered with silver or golden thread. And lest the knife slip out from behind one's belt, there was a silken ribbon on the knife-carrier, either colored, silver, or gold, corresponding to a ferrule on the scabbard that would be wrapped several times around the belt.

Sash Belts

The first belts worn in public that I recall, whether by the nobility or burghers, were of silk lace ending in twisted tassels. They came in various colors, but especially in crimson. The tassels at the end were either plain (for those of modest means) or (for the wealthier) tipped with gold or silver. No matter what, the belts were stitched with silver or gold. For everyday walking about, ribboned cloth belts would be worn with a leather under-

girding, clasped in front with an iron, brass, silver, or gold buckle, according to the ambition and resources of the individual.

Such ribboned cloth belts were soon cast aside in favor of Turkish, Persian, and Chinese sashes; the latter were so delicately fashioned of wool that even if such a sash were as much as two cubits wide, it could be passed through a finger-ring. Such sash-belts were called “buffalo belts,”³⁰⁶ and they were worn with the richest gown, although it had no decoration other than side-bands artfully decorated with charming flowers. The color of such a sash-belt was uniform, whether green, orange, crimson, or white, and it was highly prized, despite the fact that there was nothing expensive or ornamental about it except for the flowered edges. A single such belt, especially a white one, if it were new and unworn, could cost up to fifty red złotys. It was only infrequently that such made their way to Poland. They came mostly from Turkey and Persia, having already become well worn on turbans, then cleaned, pressed, and sold for new by our own Armenians.

Turkish and Persian belts were of various design, some longer, others shorter, some wider, others narrower, some sumptuous, and others ordinary. All were of silk of various color and pattern; some were richly woven with silver and gold, others not. An ordinary Turkish sash-belt, called a *mędelek*, cost at least four red złotys; one from Istanbul could cost twelve red złotys, and a Persian sash belt could cost sixteen, eighteen, or more, up to sixty red złotys, according to the quality. Besides these, one could find sash-belts in lordly wardrobes far more expensive than the prices just mentioned; a single one might be valued as high as 500 red złotys. A sash-belt like that would be nine cubits long, three cubits wide, thick as French wool, and stiff as parchment, for which reason they were not normally used for wearing but rather for decorating a lord's wardrobe or for presentation to others. It would be interwoven with silver and gold threads, or with silver on one side and gold on the other, and embroidered with silken flowers in various colors. Then came Słuck belts,³⁰⁷ in no way yielding in richness and beauty to the Turkish and Persian ones. Each such belt, whether rich or ordinary, had the words “*Factus est Sluciaë*” (Made in Słuck) embroidered at one end, so as to distinguish it from a Persian or Turkish belt.

306 *barwoli pas*: the term seems to occur as a borrowing from Kitowicz in Henryk Sienkiewicz's *Krzyżacy*, although the description here has nothing to do with buffaloes.

307 After the town of Słuck, about 100 kilometers to the south of Mińsk in present-day Belarus.

After *Śluck* belts, French belts appeared on the market in the Turkish and Persian style, by far surpassing all of the above-mentioned ones in the choiceness and liveliness of color. At one end they had the inscription “à Paris” (in Paris). Finally, the manufacture of various kinds of belts took off at various places in Poland; nevertheless, the price of belts did not fall, except for ordinary Turkish ones, which were eclipsed by the tastefulness of the new belts and no longer found a ready market.

Someone might wonder: if belt manufacturers were multiplying in Poland, then why did the price of belts not fall? The answer is simple: our country does not have silk, workable gold, nor suitable craftsmen. Everything has to be imported from abroad, and so the cost is kept high. Accordingly, a belt made in our country costs more than one made abroad, where silk is grown, and artisans are so many that they gladly accept work for a spoonful of food. That’s not like it is here, where any imported craftsman insists on a monthly salary, and those demanding the highest salaries spend most of it on drink and entertainment rather than plying their trade.

Caps

Caps during August’s reign were of various sorts; the first I remember seeing were round with a thin sheepskin band, cut in front and back forming a four-sided peak, lightly lined with cotton. At the seams where the quarters were joined they were wrapped around with thick silver or gold thread, or they would be held together with silver or gold cross-stitching. After this came caps called confederates.³⁰⁸ They were exactly of the same cut as the caps which popes are depicted as wearing, which are called pious caps. After them came Cossack caps with a high peak and a thin sheepskin band, thinly lined. Then tall sheepskin caps came into fashion, with a flat top which young fashion-plates shoved down so that the top could not be seen, just the sheepskin resting on one’s head. Caps of such shape can be seen to this day, a difference being that the band is now narrower, and

³⁰⁸ The four-cornered *konfederatka* took its name from the Bar confederacy of 1768–1772 in which it was worn (and in which Kitowicz participated), as well as in later national patriotic movements throughout the nineteenth century. More commonly the cap is called a *rogatywka*. A version of it with a bill is used by today’s Polish military.

the top higher. At first such caps were called *kuczmas*, after the Hungarian name for them; later they were called Crimeas, after the Crimean Tatars from whom the Poles borrowed the fashion. For all kinds of caps natural sheepskin was used, whether black, grey, brown, white, or mottled, but most of all black or grey. Only among the young and pretentious were other colors of sheepskin in fashion. The quality of sheep-skin was better one than another in this order: Hungarian, Crimean, and Bulgarian. Occasionally the skin of an unborn lamb from a domestic sheep farm could manage to pass for Hungarian or Bulgarian, but only if it was brown, mottled, or white; never if black or gray.

Cap-tops of various color were always of wool until August's last days, by which time, at least for summer wear, people began to use light silk tops for keeping cool. No one other than peasants going abroad in Polish costume wore hats. Whenever a young dandy was bothered by the heat of the sun, he would put a scarf over his head and around his face, lest he become sunburned, a danger to which men of the old Sarmatian persuasion paid no heed. With heads shaved smooth as a peach, they would either take off their cap or cock it over one ear and bask in the hottest sun. Once silken cap-tops had arrived, satin ones soon followed, crumpled black satin for a black sheepskin, gray for a gray, remarkably beautiful and shiny. Cap linings were usually of silk; older people, caring more for comfort than fashion, lined their caps with fox fur or the skin off the legs of sheep. Those caps were called *kapuzas*; the lining was rolled up, and it could be rolled down over the head to where it covered the entire face, leaving only the nose open for breathing and the eyes for seeing.

For a major parade senators and wealthy nobles of advanced age wore sable busbies capped with crimson, dark blue, or green velvet. In the middle of the busby over the forehead they would set in the midst of the sable tips³⁰⁹ some shiny precious stone or diamond signet, which made a Pole appear wonderfully ponderous and decorative. The cut of the busby would be the same as the Crimean caps, but because of their height and the size of the sable tips it gave a different impression.

309 In order not to damage the valuable sable fur, the feet would be left on the pelt.

Trousers

Trousers or, as they were universally known among the nobility and rich burghers in Polish, simply “pants,” were made of poppy-red or crimson French wool, or from light blue satin or damask. Some people decorated the seams of the crotch with silver or gold piping, while some wore their seams undecorated, and still others merely reinforced the seams with gold or silver cross-stitching. Whoever could not afford silver or gold piping or cross-stitching, or held them to be an excess (but who nevertheless, as one said, had an eye for fashion), applied in that place blue silk tape with cross-stitching to match, which only went with wool pants. Trousers were wide and flaring and came down to the shins and, lest they slide up when donning shoes, they would be held down with stirrups of lace.

For a long time under August’s reign Poles tied their trousers with an *uczkur*, which was a netted silk belt with elongated ends sometimes ending in silver and gold tassels. It would be strung around the trousers and tied in the manner of peasant long underwear of the sort that country folk still wear, except that they tie their underwear on the side, while the nobility tied their trousers of the sort I have described in front, right over the fly, which was concealed by the ends of the *uczkur* with its tassels, which hung over the top of the trousers. So that the folds of the trousers, which were always broader than a man’s crotch, did not gather up or balloon like on a sausage, a baste strip was added both to wool and damask or satin trousers, silk on the outside and heavy cloth on the inside, between which ran the *uczkur*. With wool trousers the basting was of blue satin; with damask and satin trousers, it would be of taffeta or, among the less wealthy, of imitation taffeta. Eventually *uczkurs* were abandoned, and pants began to be fastened and held up by buttons, German-style.

Boots

Boots in use were of three colors: yellow, red, and black. The top of the boot was short, calf-high in back but longer in front, reaching halfway to the knee with a part called the *wichlarz*, sewn together at the sides out of two pieces of leather, and wide for reason of the width of the pant legs. The heel of a boot would be stiffened with a thin sliver of wood set into the

leather so that the heel not bend or wrinkle, and beneath the sole at the heel a metal tap would be fastened, as much as three finger-widths high, among the nobility painted white or simply of silver, but among country folk merely polished and smoothed a bit with a file. As August III's reign progressed, flat taps looking more like horseshoes became the fashion, fastened to the sole with three nails. Finally, taps were abandoned altogether, in place of which all-leather heels appeared as on German shoes, but lower; and that was what boots looked like according to the latest fashion under August III.

As long as taps were in fashion every cobbler's shop had a blacksmith working for it who would attach various kinds of taps to shoes according to the current fashion, taking six groschen each for plain ones and twelve groschen each for ones smoothed off with a file; whitened or silver ones were obtained from other craftsmen. Women also commonly used smallish taps, nailed on by the cobbler himself for three groschen the pair. And such a cobbler in larger towns needed no other employ, getting enough profit from the taps all by themselves.

The general public and the petty gentry differed from people poorer than themselves. They would wear new black boots with slightly-worn yellow or red boot-tops attached to them, out of a desire, common to human nature, to represent themselves as something better than they actually were, each such person wanting to create the impression that he had first bought new yellow or red boots and, after wearing them for a while, out of economy had ordered black bottoms put on them, even though in actuality he had bought them that way from the cobbler in the beginning, as being cheaper than all-yellow or red new ones, even if they were slightly more expensive than ordinary all-black ones. From such practice arose the saying "You can tell a gentleman by his boot-tops."

Shirts

A Polish shirt had wide sleeves coming down over the hands with a narrow collar tied under the neck or fastened with a silver, gold, or ruby pin, of which nothing was visible under the gown. The length of the shirt among those who, according to old Polish custom, wore wool long underwear over their bare skin beneath their trousers, did not quite reach

the knees. Among those who no longer wore long underwear, the shirt reached down to mid shin.

The Full Costume

Having described each piece belonging to a Pole's wardrobe individually, let us now view him as he was then, with all of it put together. According to the oldest fashion I experienced under August III, the kontusz and żupan reached down practically to the ground. They were narrow in the shoulders and tailored to fit according to a man's musculature; from the waist down, it fell in folds and buttoned in front, with a tiny narrow collar on both żupan and kontusz, each buttoned on a single small loop. From neck to waist a narrow strip of the żupan could be seen beneath the kontusz. Dembski, (marshal of Żaluzki and bishop of Kraków), Szaniawski (starosta of Kąkolownice), and Kraszewski (at the time a courtier to the voivode of Kiev) were the three Polish fashion plates of the day. Whatever the color of the żupan, that was also the color of the boots they wore, whether yellow, red, green, light blue, and so on; but their taste was not followed by everyone. The sleeves of both żupan and kontusz were narrow, and the slits of the kontusz ran from the armpits open down to the elbow, out of which peered the żupan. The edges of both one and the other did not overlap in the least but only just met, so that they opened whenever one sat or walked about, allowing the trousers to be seen, a sight which made a person seem either more or less serious. For if the trousers were clean, new, and expensively made, they created on the on-looker the impression of his being a gentleman, a man of substance. If trousers were revealed that had holes, were patched, worn, or wrinkled, the conviction arose that the person walking about in them must be of little consequence. For that reason, when mud began to threaten those walking around in such long costume, those who had good trousers took the folds of their gowns up from the rear and lifted them up high so that they not become soiled, according to the metaphorical saying "Lift yourself up by the rear."³¹⁰ Those whose pants were of meaner quality clasped more tightly together the front edges of their clothing, causing them in

³¹⁰ In Polish, *nieść zadek w garści*.

this way to hitch up only slightly to half-shin, without revealing by one's knees or legs the poor state of one's pants.

As long as one's dress was worn long, the hair was worn long too, both front and back and all around, abundant and of equal length, falling over half the forehead in front and to the middle of the ears on the sides, beneath which the entire bare neck poked out.

And since in those days the use of carriages about town was unknown other than by great lords and representatives to the Sejm, while the rest of the nobility, along with everyone else, rich or poor, swarmed about the streets on foot, the fashion of long gowns, so susceptible to soiling, began to die out around the fifteenth year of August III's reign; two years at the most after that they had died out completely. In their place came another kind, quite short, and in all respects different from the first. The *kontusz* and *zupan* barely covered the knee, while the cut of the gown from collar to waist was horrendously bouffant, so much so that one could safely pack a loaf of bread under one's arms. The collar of the *kontusz* was of the turn-down variety but reached so high that it almost covered the whole neck; the sleeves came down over the fingers and, for additional length, they were pleated down the arms, with tiny apertures that barely gave a glimpse of the *zupan* underneath, often requiring the lifting of the arms lest they not conceal it completely. With no crease either in front or in back, they made a man appear not to be wearing a tailored garment but rather to be wrapped in a piece of fabric. The edges in front overlapped as far as the armpits, and there was no need to fear its coming open, because such a tight cut, when additionally closely wrapped around a person, barely allowed the possibility of his taking a big step. The trousers sticking out from beneath such gowns were large and puffy, and fell halfway down over the boot tops. To those who had never seen them before they looked ridiculous in good weather and, in foul weather, spattered with mud, they made a Pole look a very sorry sight indeed. But as long as something is in fashion it passes for good style, no matter if it is the worst and most uncomfortable thing imaginable.

Accompanying this fashion, the hair became reduced to a few tufts left at the very top, for which reason more serious people called people wearing such hairstyles, which were especially popular with the young and hangers-on at court, onion-heads, because of the similarity of their head to an onion, whose smooth ball is also topped by a small tuft.

Belts going with this dress had to be as long and wide as possible, and since no belt was sufficient to match the thickness and width to which fashionable belting now pretended, people would wrap two or three sashes together; less wealthy dandies would add on towels, sheets, or tufts of hemp. The knot at the front, when cinched, was thick as a loaf of bread; together with the belt it hung down low over the crotch in front, the ends of the belt being tucked behind one's back. However, many older gentlemen moderated this fashion, called Cirkassian, by combining the old and the new, using gowns not quite as long and narrow-cut as the original ones, but not as short and puffy as the new ones either; and they also cinched themselves less thickly. Potocki, the voivode of Wołyń, an old man of many years, wore no sash belt at all until his dying day but limited himself to nothing beyond his saber straps, preserving the custom of former times which supposedly was in fashion under August II, but no longer under August III. The hair of many men also was not shaved quite so high as described, but no one any longer followed the old-fashioned hair style described earlier.

Boots were lined with straw; in summer the feet were wrapped in linen cloths, to which in winter were added coarse wool wraps, both one and the other of which were called footcloths; the straw for the boot went by the name of whisks. Great lords, senators, hetmans—whoever went about in Polish dress—put straw in their boots, and it was one of the duties of the haiduks, paiuks, or servant lads to put fresh whisks of straw into the boots, cutting it to the size of the boot with scissors or shaping it into the same size with their hands. Before the end of August's reign, first footcloths and then the straw whisks were abandoned, as neatness played an increasingly greater role in Polish costume. Another major reason was consideration for the waxed floors that had come into use, which could not stand up to the straw and the litter they made. In its place came inner soles made of felt, coarse wool, or other such material. Footcloths for their part became replaced by stockings or Turkish slippers. Still, for warmth and health, straw whisks were far better than any kind of inner sole, for the reason that straw has the property of drawing away moisture, an excess of which causes the feet to stink horribly. But, as for neatness and refinement, it is much neater when a guest in a respectable home lays his socks and inner soles out on a stool to dry, whereas formerly he would hang his

footcloths out and, even with all due caution, let drop the tufts of straw sour with foot smell on the waxed floor.

The third and final fashion of Polish dress appeared after the puffy one in the last years of August III, a style that was quite attractive, neither too short nor too long. The cut was attractive too, not overly tight nor too blousy, with smooth and slender sleeves. It had elongated lapels on the front of the kontusz and slits in the sleeves such that it allowed the żupan to be seen for which, since it quickly became soiled at the openings, they fashioned little protective sleeves, made out of pieces of the same material, sewn on the front. Shirts began coming with collars that turned down over the narrow collar of the żupan, with cuffs on the sleeves of the shirt that rolled up over the sleeves of the żupan and were fastened with metal cuff links or, among the great lords, with cuff links of diamond or pearl. At this time it rarely ever happened that the sleeves of the kontusz were slipped over the arms; typically they hung over the shoulders. Żupans in the Crown Kingdom up until then were made of the same rich material both front and back, while with Lithuanians the back of the żupan, even the most expensive, was made out of plain cloth.

At about the same time watches became more common, along with watch fobs to go along with them; diamond pins were worn at the neck, and rings on the finger, all of which greatly added to the decorativeness of the clothing. At first, as watches became more numerous, Poles carried them in little pockets on the right side of the żupan. Germans wore them in their trousers, along with fobs, chains, and silken ribbons with tassels of silver or gold hanging out for public view. Later on, Poles transferred their watches to their breast pocket, while Germans left them where they had been.

Poles also began using kontuszes made of plain fabric, whether cotton or camlet, as well as for cap tops, matching the żupan as to color. A cotton or camlet kontusz was no longer called a kontusz but a doublet.³¹¹ In the end Poles, more and more imitating effeminacy of dress, dreamed up żupans for wearing beneath the kontusz which were lined with either red or green silk, instead of which the less wealthy used shiny linen in the same colors.

311 In Polish, *kubrak*. Camlet is a fabric made of goat or camel hair and silk.

Wolf-skins and Other Coats

In winter time of old, people used wolf-skin wraps, lined with crimson silk, fastened around the neck with a thick silver or gold cord. When one sat in a coach, the wolf-skin would be wrapped around the shoulders; when out walking or on horseback, people would hang them half-way around themselves, over one shoulder and side, leaving the other side exposed; and when that side became cold, they would shift the wolf-skin around to cover it. Wolf-skins took their name from the fur of that animal, but they were not all made of wolf fur; wealthier people wore black or gray fox fur or sheepskin. The latter, because they held the heat less well than an animal with longer fur, were lined with ermine. As for wolf skins from actual wolves, the whiter they were the more expensive, although when a wolf skin was made of brown-skin wolf or fox fur, it was prized even more than white, and could sometimes cost as much as a hundred red zlotys. It served as cover only for great lords and for the very wealthy nobility. An ordinary wolf-skin lined with taffeta, which was what the less wealthy nobility, the miserly, and serving folk wore, did not cost more than six, five, or even four red zlotys, and it would commonly be made from the skin of native wolves. Podolian, Swedish, and Siberian wolves would cost more, and one would cost more than one another, according to quality. There were also "wolf-skins" made from select white lambskin lined with ermine, but those were very rare.

The wolf-skin was worn by both Poles and Germans (by which I mean Poles dressing German-style). But not everyone: German-style gentlemen more often wore red woolen coats with gold buttons and arm-slits stiffened by sewn-on patches for resting the arms in, lined with various sorts of fur, most often fox; still, wolf-skins of the sort just described were in use for a long time, although increasingly rarely.

Fashion now introduced the bekishe, which can still be seen among city folk and the poorer gentry. A bekishe is a lined gown cut like a kon-tusz, but with closed sleeves, sufficiently elegant that it may take the place of either a żupan or a kontusz. It is fastened in front by cords looped around buttons. Bekishes first appeared in yellow and were lined with the finest gray lambskin and had silver or silver and blue silk attachments; the less elegant ones used silk only, and the lambskin underneath was of any

old sort, but with a better, gray or black, facing. These yellow bekishes so proliferated that after a while not a single courtier or dandy could be found who didn't own one.

It happened over the course of several years that as a sign of fealty to king August, who had given yellow livery to his servants, the gentlemen at court wore the same color of yellow bekishes so as to create the impression of being his loyal servants, although in their hearts they felt completely otherwise. Lesser people, not spotting the artifice or giving it any thought, modeled themselves after those gentlemen and adopted yellow bekishes en masse, but as soon as the courtiers gave them up, so did the others, the yellow color disappearing just as quickly as it had arisen. But the bekishes long remained in circulation in a wide variety of colors and trimmed with a wide variety of fur, surviving into the days of Stanisław August.

Upon the disappearance of yellow bekishes, long crimson-colored fur-lined overcoats called *kieręje*, or great-coats, arrived to take their place. They had wide sleeves and were not drawn in at the waist. Sometimes the sleeves were cut narrow at the wrists, and sometimes, especially with Germans, they were wide from the shoulder all the way down. The great-coat did not displace bekishes entirely.³¹² Those who liked to be warm, and travelers, would put on both a bekishe and over it a great-coat. A crimson great-coat, besides being warm (a trait common to any color, as long as it is lined with fur), also added to one's esteem. Anyone not having a crimson great-coat was considered to be a country bumpkin. And whatever value the crimson great-coat had, the same could be said of a cloak, or duster, of the same color and cut of the great-coat, lined with damask or blue satin. With a hood tacked on, it served to cover the head from rain and dust during one's travels. Residents of smaller towns and the petty gentry were particularly fond of great-coats, as they could be both worn as costume and traveled in; during the day they served as dress and at night for a blanket. The great-coat could be used to tell the difference between a nobleman and a city-dweller, in that a person with a saber at his side was recognized as noble; a person without a saber but only a cane in his hand would be a burgher. But the great-coats of burghers were neither crimson in color nor lined with wolf-fur but only with

³¹² Another example of Kitowicz's over-riding in one sentence what he has just said in another.

coarse wool, most often red, less frequently green or white, with navy-blue or gray cloth underneath.

Lithuanians lined their crimson great-coats with black or gray bear-skin or with black fox-fur, and the custom of lining their coats with bear-skin was borrowed from them by people of the Crown. The fur of a bear does not shed as much as wolf fur does, but it is not as warm as a wolf—not even the shaggiest or the youngest of bears—since bears do not have as much down beneath their hair as wolves, and the skin of a bear has tiny holes in it, letting the wind pass through it more than a wolf, which is thicker and shaggier.

The crimson color lasted a bit longer than yellow, but at most for ten years, after which people opted for great-coats of green, which matched better the color of wolf fur, and then for various other colors. But no matter how much they changed in color, great-coats did not die out completely, for they remained the most comfortable outer garment, whether for town wear or for travel; but they were never again as popular as they had been at the beginning. The *delia*³¹³ was instead adopted by half of coat-wearers, differing in no way from the great-coat except that, unlike a great-coat, it was tailored around the waist. And as soon as *delias* arrived, so did cloaks similarly gathered in at the waist, of various colors and lined with sky-blue satin; and this was a garment in which one could properly enter a room, for to enter a room in a regular cloak, even a crimson one, was considered a grave indelicacy. But such cloaks, made of the best French cloth, were not worn by common folk but only by the most wealthy, especially by those at court. The *delias* eventually came to be known as *czujas*,³¹⁴ but that name did nothing to change anything about them.

[. . .]

Ordinary gentlemen could not figure out how to differ from the greater nobility; whatever fashion they tried, they would soon see it copied by the nobility. A gentleman would order his *kontusz* studded with pearls; a wealthy nobleman, even though it was his duty to cover his wife and daughters with pearls, had to do the same with his *kontusz*, or at least have buttons made that looked like pearls. No sooner would a gentleman pin to his

³¹³ From the Turkish *degle*.

³¹⁴ From the Hungarian *csuha*.

kontusz some kind of expensive trinket studded with diamonds and precious stones, than a wealthy nobleman's son would bargain with his mother, his sisters, and his aunts for earrings, bracelets, and rings, from which he would try to have something similar, if not similarly prized, fashioned.

Piotr Sapieha, voivode of Smoleńsk, growing disgusted at such competition, gave thought to how he might dress himself so that none of the nobility might imitate him. He ordered himself a *czechman* of white *molleton*,³¹⁵ lined with sky-blue satin, and sewed his order onto it.³¹⁶ In Poznań his choice of dress stood out in the first court trials: he was the only one there parading in a molleton czechman. But as soon as he arrived at the next trials he found almost every citizen of Poznań decked out in a molleton czechman, if not necessarily fully lined with satin then at least faced with it. And more was his surprise when later that year he saw Warsaw full of molleton czechmans. He donated his to his cook, and forthwith all molleton czechmans were passed on to kitchen help, stable-masters, and minor provincial officials.

Although throughout this description I have tried to mention all of the styles and materials in use under August III, I nevertheless forgot to put in their proper place the shiny white satin *zupans* worn by members of the court and other nobles and burghers. They had a narrow silk ribbon, gathered into zig-zags about the collar and in front from neck to waist, and they were worn with woolen sash belts of varying color adorned with strips of flowers embroidered in silk or silver and gold thread, tipped with a silver or gold tassel at the end. Such belts were used alongside netted belts before Turkish and Persian belts came into fashion.

When traveling, instead of kontuszes, Poles wore green wool jackets trimmed with red taffeta with small buttons fashioned at a jeweler's on the front and around the sleeves, serving only for appearance and not for fastening. That was only for summer wear. In winter they wore the same kind of jackets lined with sheepskin, lynx, fox, or wolf. To the *zupan* they added large wool galligaskins of gray or green, and that was also the travel costume of every courtier obliged by custom to ride in front of a carriage carrying a saber and cartridge belt.

³¹⁵ *czechman*: a Turkish-style kontusz without slits in the sleeves. *molleton*: a French cotton fabric imitating flannel.

³¹⁶ See the chapter "On Orders."

Although I have not set for myself the task of describing German costume, I nevertheless must at least touch upon one of its more extravagant aspects. Poles adopting such costume went overboard on piping and embroidery and applied it so thickly and widely, covering all seams with piping or colbertines,³¹⁷ that it was barely possible to see even a bit of cloth underneath. Then they started to add rich embroidery to winter clothing, and silk imported from France to summer wear. The style of the embroidery was adapted to the place of the garment to which it was applied. Brabantian³¹⁸ lace was added to cuffs around the sleeves and shirt fronts, which all together could cost as much as fifty red zlotys. For gala events, gentlemen of the first rank would adorn their costume with diamond buttons, or ones made of precious stones. At other times they used silver or gold buttons either bought at a jeweler's or cast to look as if they had been.

Hairstyles

Some people wore their hair natural, curled or powdered according to the fashion of the day, while others, for the most part older people, wore large wigs covering half the side of the head, hanging down in locks or curls over their shoulders. Younger people put the ends of their wigs or natural hair in flat black silk sacks hanging over the shoulders, while others cut their hair low like a Benedictine monk's and sprinkled it with powder; they called this "Swedish style." People who wore their hair natural covered their head with a hat. People who wore wigs did not wear hats but rather carried some sort of old hat crushed under their arm, because later on, when all heads were generally powdered, they could return greetings not by uncovering their heads but by taking their hat out from under their arm. The reason for not covering their heads was that their fashionably curled and thickly powdered hairdo would be deformed by a hat; the hat would get all sticky with powder; and indoors, when it would have to be transferred back under one's arms, it would leave a smudge on one's clothing. It was amusing then for a Pole, having his head covered with a warm cap, to see a German running about town in a heavy wolfskin, bearskin or

³¹⁷ *colbertine*: a kind of dense lace. Named after Jean B. Colbertine, a seventeenth-century French statesman.

³¹⁸ *Brabantian*: from Brabant in the Netherlands, famous for its lace manufacture.

other fur coat but bare-headed in the frostiest of weather. But then fashion can endure anything.

For all that, when a Turkish delegate had an audience in the Sejm, gentlemen in German dress took along hats suitable for covering the head. Turks always have their heads covered with a turban, and lest Poles appear before the delegate with uncovered heads, as soon as the Turk entered the Senate the senators would all immediately cover their heads with caps or hats.





4 I.

WOMEN'S WEAR:
HEADGEAR, MANTLES, AND HOOP SKIRTS

Kitowicz's recollection of the details of the fabric, color, and design of women's fashion some forty years prior to his writing about them practically surpasses belief. At the same time, as a whole the chapter on women's dress, from which this mildly misogynistic selection is taken, can be tedious for its detail. As he does in the preceding chapter for men's clothing, he goes into every minute change in fashion for every item of women's clothing he can call to mind, from the top of the head to the bottom of the feet. Included here are the more entertaining parts of the chapter on women's clothing, concerning women's headgear, the mantle, and hoop skirts.

O.E.S.

I would need the assistance of some old housekeeper in order to describe perfectly all the dresses and costumes in use by women of foremost or common rank under the reign of August III. But if ever such a woman could be found, she would have to be very old, and therefore unable to recount all of the fashions for reason of a weakened memory, which tends to vanish more quickly among women than men.³¹⁹ So I will have to lay out for the Reader whatever it is I remember on my own. I will begin with the head, which is the first thing one notices when one casts an eye at another person.

Maidens of senatorial and noble status,³²⁰ as well as magistrates' and merchants' daughters, wore their head in braids let down, intertwined

319 According to recent statistics, female dementia does outnumber male dementia by a factor of around 3:2, even when counting the fact that women live longer than men, an observation that, while perspicacious by Kitowicz, seems extraneous in a chapter on women's dress.

320 Senatorial wives and daughters are the wives and daughters of senators. By "magistrates," Kitowicz means town officials in general, not necessarily only ones with a judiciary function.

with a ribbon. Around their foreheads they would wear a muslin headband trimmed with lace, with varicolored ribbons trained into the tresses. On top of the head were pinned various garden flowers: rosemary, matthiola, carnations, tulips or, in wintertime, artificial Italian flowers or silk ones of their own manufacture, imitating natural ones. They adorned these bouquets with silver wire and metal shiners, and they would pin to the bouquets caps and tiny hats made of silk barely bigger than a thimble, along with tiny birds of silk. Later they wore their locks freely around their head with no ribbons or braiding, until finally they cut their locks short around the neck like married women, letting their hair fall free. By that time, the head decorations of all women—old women, young maidens, married women, and widows—were the same. The rich cloth hoods formerly used by married women and widows were cast aside by all the younger people of whatever marital status, although they still appeared for a while on women of a certain age and showing their years, who placed head-comfort above fashion. All young and former maidens abandoned everything else for bonnets, whose shape is not so easy to describe, since it changed practically from month to month. It depended on various ways of folding them, pleating them, cutting them, and curling the muslin, the edges, the lace, and the ribbons.

Bonnets

The oldest bonnets were of two kinds: dyed yellow like communion wafers, and white. A yellow bonnet was worn underneath, and the white one on top, in two ways: sometimes over the cheeks and tied with a ribbon under the chin, and at other times tied over the head. Yellow bonnets during August III's reign were short-lived, being worn for a period of only five or six years under that monarch, except for Lady Radzewska, wife of the Poznań chamberlain, who outlived August III and used an old-style yellow bonnet, and everything else old-fashioned as well, until her very death. In winter, over the bonnet would be worn a black, crimson, or rose-colored velvet hood, lined with silk or other light fabric, layered with cotton and trimmed with black lace, tied under the chin with a bright red or green ribbon. There were two types of hood, one smaller, covering only the top of the head, the temple, and the ears. Then there was the large wide

hood, covering the entire head and back of the neck and sticking out in front by a palm's width or more, so that the face of the person wearing such a hood tied beneath the chin peered out as if from a deep box. And when they felt an excess of warmth they tied it up about their temples. Hoods like this were not worn for longer than ten years, after which came little velvet busby hats, green or poppy red, rimmed with ermine and with flaxen tufts falling down over the shoulders, ending in golden or silver tassels.

But the busby hats were soon cast aside, to be followed by the fashion of large bonnets supported by wire, in which fashionable ladies could keep warm in the bitterest of cold (it was the fashion that kept them warm). Nevertheless, on top of this fashionable warmth they added little quilted cloth caps the size and shape of a Jewish skull-cap which covered their hair in such a way that the bonnet seemed to be sitting on top of a bare head. Such bonnets were imported from Paris, and they were pinned up in Warsaw according to the Parisian style, and in that style they spread throughout the entire country. Although a woman might be up to trying to pin such a bonnet up by herself at home, the naked eye could instantly spot the difference, and none was ever as nicely done as one pinned up professionally in Warsaw; for which reason many lady shop-keepers, citizens of Warsaw, made a nice living from those bonnets, with several girls on staff for pinning them up, reserving themselves for designing and cutting especially shapely ones, as if masters of their craft. The cheapest bonnet could be had for twenty zlotys, and the most expensive one for six ducats, even if the cost in materials could not have come to more than ten zlotys, and a skillful girl could pin up two per day. However, it is the style that adds most of the cost to things made of common material. Professional bonnet-fitters would sit with their girls in front of their store windows (closed in the winter for warmth and also in summer against the dust), through which the pretty faces of the girls looking out enticed purchasers of bonnets to come inside, including men who had no need of a bonnet but just wanted to flirt.

A husband could not expect a very warm welcome from a wife if he returned home from a trip to Warsaw without a bonnet, which was the first question of concern as he crossed the threshold. One such husband once purchased a fashionable bonnet for his wife, who was inclined to get mad as a hornet over anything. He drove merrily home, certain of a pleasant

reception, but due to an unfortunate placement of the hatbox, the bottom had fallen out, losing the bonnet somewhere along the way. The husband, arriving home at dusk, all jolly at the prospect of presenting the bonnet, took the box in hand and carried it straight through and handed it to his wife. "Here, my darling, I've brought you a lovely bonnet." Taking it as a sign of deliberate malice when her hand reached into the empty hat-box, the wife beat her husband over the head with it, berating him with words most particular. Without waiting for any further reward, the husband returned to Warsaw with all due haste, bringing back home another bonnet with him. But his wife steadfastly maintained that the one he had lost had been prettier, even though she had never seen it.

Finally, in place of bonnets came chignons: preposterously high caps made of cloth, stuffed with cotton or flax tow, making the head appear two times as tall as it naturally is. These chignons, placed on top of the head, would be covered all around both front and rear with hair smoothly teased up and powdered, and if a lady's own natural hair was insufficient, they added more of the same color as the hair with which she had been born. At the very top of the chignon, over the brow, they pinned a small winged bonnet held there by wires; and that was the fashion until August III's last days.

[...]

Mantles

During August III's reign mantles³²¹ first appeared in Warsaw on the shoulders of two Frenchwomen by the name of Bersouville, causing merriment and mockery, as they looked rather like a coat with a Bernardine monk's hood attached. However, a taste slowly developed for what had previously seemed eccentric, and no more than six months had passed before already half of the more distinguished members of the fair sex were wrapping themselves in mantles. At first, they were made of thin black Chinese taffeta, and not lined with anything, but later they were lined with various sorts of fur or taffeta, with red satin and silk matting for warmth. In addition to the lining, they also differed from the first man-

³²¹ In Polish, *salopa*.

tles in that those came down only to the knees, while now they reached almost to the heels. Nor is that all, for now women dreamed up semi-mantles, reaching only to the waist but with longer ends in front and only a small hood.

A mantle is a garment as virtuous as it is comfortable. First of all, it has the virtue of modesty, inasmuch as it envelopes the entire person, concealing the midsection, that is, the waist, from lecherous eyes, as well as the bosom, or breasts, these being women's two most powerful points of enticement. However, they say that the mantle was not devised out of such pious motives, but rather by a hunchbacked woman who, being unable to assume a shapely form, sought a means for concealing her deformity. A second advantage of the mantle is that it may be donned in haste, so that it is convenient for a woman in a hurry or lazy in dress, who does not care about appearances or about being caught in it unexpectedly. A third advantage is that it covers up poor clothing; a sheepskin coat or any sort of dress can get by as long as the mantle is a good one.

Hoop Skirts

Not long after mantles came hoop skirts. At first, they were small, but later they became larger: as much as three cubits across at the bottom. Hoop skirts were not worn by ladies of any other state than noble, especially senators' wives and the young ladies attending them. Often enough some burgher's wife would venture to put on a hoop skirt, but she would always be snubbed, and that is why hoop skirts blossomed only among the most distinguished ladies. A hoop skirt was an under-skirt made of cloth attached to three rings made out of whalebone. The rings were not round like those on a barrel, but elongated, like an oval bathtub. Ladies using hoop skirts would first put on a fabric skirt, either plain or quilted, depending on the time of year. Over it they put the hoop skirt, and finally over the hoopskirt they would wear a large gown of whatever sort was in fashion. Nothing was more uncomfortable for both men and women than those hoop skirts, which made everything crowded all around. If two women wanted to sit next to each other in a carriage, when one of them was taller and the other shorter, the first had to cover up the second with the wing of her hoop. It was the same at table, especially if people were sitting close to one an-

other. If a Pole were seated next to a lady, it did his hairstyle no harm if his head were jostled by her hoop skirt, but if it was a German, or another lady, their hairdo or bonnet would be ruined, and they would have to get up from table and go straighten it out and arrange it again. The funniest thing was to see a German, and a bald one at that, having the wig knocked off his head by the careless fling of a hoop skirt. Such occurrences never caused offence, for fashion had everyone in its thrall.

However, since there is nothing so bad among all things on earth that does not have at least a tiny bit of goodness in it, so too it was with hoop skirts, for although they made a great nuisance of themselves both to their wearers and to those around them, in quarrelsome company they could serve as fortresses. More than once a coward, once swords had been drawn, would retreat beneath a hoop skirt, and while others were nicking each other's foreheads, noses, and cheeks, and lopping off one another's hands, he would sit in good health beneath a hoop skirt and wait until the skirmish was over, for no one would dare attack a man as long as one lady covered him up and the rest formed a barricade and hiding place around him against a corner, barring all access with their hoop skirts.

Hoop skirts were not in common use for longer than fifteen years. At first no lady in public sight, or even in her own home with a guest, would show herself other than in a hoop skirt. Then they began to be worn only to major public events like balls and large gatherings; finally, toward the final years of August III's reign, these towering hindrances were tossed completely aside except for gala days at court allocated to senatorial wives for kissing the royal hand. On such days, the ladies presented themselves to the king in a robe over a hoop skirt, a "robe" being a dark gown cut like a child's caftan, laced up the back, with elbow-length sleeves encased in the finest lace as far as the shoulders, its long train sweeping the floor.





OF SNUFF AND SNUFF BOXES

Contemporary historians have come to appreciate the reign of August III for being a time of great innovation in the “finer things” (mainly, things of foreign importation) in the areas of home decoration, cuisine, costume, entertainment, and—here—tobacco consumption. Like some other chapters of the Description, this one depicts the rise and fall of a custom that but for Kitowicz would never have been chronicled: the brief-lived popularity of fancy snuff of suspicious Italian origin, eventually abandoned for the home-made Polish variety—not out of patriotism, but because of concern over the kinds of adulterants Italian snuff was said to contain. Along the way, we are introduced to the colorful character of the enterprising woman tobacconist from Sicily, Syracusana. Eventually, Poland started importing its snuff, like everyone else, from France, Spain, and Holland, inaugurating the golden age of the snuff box.

Kitowicz’s fascination with the various shapes, sizes, and materials of tabakierki (snuff boxes) is not unique to him, as they remain a favorite collector’s item to this day. It is amusing that, while the author feels driven to describe in great detail what the snuff boxes of his day looked like (which is just about what one expects), he does not pause to consider that his future audience might not know what a Polish butter-box looks like, how much half of a Greater Polish round cheese might come to, what the size of a schilling was, or what and where the “Nuremberg stores” were—all items that he uses as terms of orientation. For those wishing to attempt making snuff Italian style, the rudiments of the recipe may be found here. As is the case with many of Kitowicz’s descriptions, this one ends by going off on a tangent, here on the subject of signet rings.

Only one form of sustenance seems never to go out of fashion, and once it has arrived in the world, it never goes away; and if in former times it was otherwise than today's version of our daily bread, then I retract my opinion, but I base it on what I have observed.

As I recall, snuff was at first simple, made out of tobacco ground in a pot, to which confirmed sniffers, who preferred to get along without real bread than without snuff, would add wicker-wood bark ash or ash from burnt pea pods for better body, and which also aided in the tickling of the nose. After this came grated tobacco from Saint-Omer,³²² which was produced on a tin grating plate. Being more expensive than ordinary tobacco, it was used only by the more prosperous.

At the beginning of August III's reign, a certain Italian woman appeared in Warsaw, from the town of Syracuse, on which basis she called herself and signed her name as Syracusana. But the Warsaw common folk, and the whole rest of the country after them, having a predilection for foul mouths, referred to her as Shittyana.³²³ This lady devised snuff of the same granularity as gunpowder, and of the same color. Other ingredients in the concoction besides tobacco (which was its foremost component), were lavender and essence of orange. When the snuff was flavored with lavender, it was called Lavender, and when flavored with essence of orange, it was called Bergamot. To both one and the other, copper water³²⁴ would be added for darkness and for pinchiness; and human urine for better stickiness and consistency. As is the case with gunpowder, one kind was coarser, the other finer, as was indicated by the tobacco being labeled with various numbers: Lavender No. 2, No. 4, No. 8; Bergamot No. 2, No. 4, No. 8.

Before long, snuff like this came into such demand, and not only in Warsaw, that no one wanted any other kind, just pulverized, and anyone who visited Warsaw endeavored not to leave town without powdered snuff. And even though certain shop-keepers undertook to make powdered snuff in their own way, none enjoyed nearly as much popularity as Shittyana's.

³²² Saint-Omer, near Calais, has long been a major center of the French tobacco industry. In the eighteenth century, its tobacco was especially prized for snuff manufacture.

³²³ In Polish: *Srajkozina*, based on *śrać* (to shit) alluding, as we will see, to certain of the alleged snuff ingredients.

³²⁴ *kopperwas*: a green hydrated ferrous sulfate, $\text{FeSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$, used in making inks and pigments, not to be used internally.

Whether this arose from prejudice or from experience as to which was better I do not know, for at the time I did not use snuff; that is just the way it was. For as long as that lady was alive, no one could take the snuff mantle away from her. She made a fortune out of this miserable powder, bought herself a townhouse, and gave away her daughters in marriage with good dowries to noblemen.

After Syracusana, a man called Fontanna took up the trade in powdered tobacco, and after him his brother, Bizesti, stepped forward. All such people prospered and founded fortunes, as powdered snuff and its use became increasingly spread throughout the entire population, requiring more and more producers: no longer by the chest or the pound, as privateers had done in the beginning. Tradesmen and hucksters would distribute it about the country in enormous wagons, bearing attestation from the producers as to its quality, allowing people to formulate their own snuff at home, Warsaw-style.

Fortune favored snuff for a dozen years or so after Syracusana's death, after which these tobacconists disappeared almost overnight. Whether out of spite or genuine concern, a certain lad from a snuff factory reported in secret to the Marshal's Court³²⁵ that the powdered snuff makers were mixing into it ash burnt from human corpses, closely cropped horse hair, human urine, and horse droppings, along with copper water. The marshal's judge ordered his chief investigator to summon all tobacco manufacturers to his court. They denied that they ever used human ashes, horse hair, or horse droppings; such ingredients were unnecessary for their tobacco, they said. As for the rest, they obtained depositions from doctors to the effect that in any case they were harmful neither to the nose nor to human health. However, without investigating the matter further, assuming the testimony to have been bought, and feeling no need to make fuller inquiry after hearing about human ashes and horse excrement, as soon as news of the inquiry made the rounds, the people gave up powdered snuff as a lost cause and never felt like returning to it. Everyone abandoned it, rich and poor alike, and went back to the "tile" snuffs of their own device, made out of simple domestic tobacco³²⁶ ground against a piece of tile or

³²⁵ See the chapter "The Marshal's Courts."

³²⁶ Today's fairly sizable Polish tobacco industry is located in the southeast of the country, around Miechów.

in a jar. It was to the good luck of the powdered snuff-makers that the calamity hit them after they had already accumulated substantial fortunes.

After the downfall of powdered snuff, and on the heels of the tile snuffs, foreign snuffs arrived from Saint-Omer, Holland, and Spain. The most widely used was Holland, sold in small and large bricks. A small brick weighed a pound and cost fifteen groschen. A large one could weigh six, eight, or even more pounds, with the price just mentioned being adjusted accordingly. Each person made snuff out of these bricks according to his own taste. Spanish snuff was sold ready to use, while Saint-Omer came in two varieties: by the pulverized pound and in long bars. Beyond this, merchants in spice stores would make snuff for the common folk by grinding it to a powder in a mortar and sifting it through a sieve. Such snuff was in use for as long as August III was alive.

Snuff Boxes

The oldest snuff boxes, which were handed down from generation to generation, and were in use from the beginning of August III's reign, were made of silver, either gilded on the inside or not, of various styles, and either smooth or chased. They could also be of mother-of-pearl, with silver, gold, or pot-metal clasps and bands. Others were made of horn, that is, from the tiny horns of oxen, or from elk hooves, cleverly worked and bound with silver or gold, or encrusted with the same metal in the shape of various figures. The common folk for their part used simple horns, slightly flattened, or snuff boxes of pressed tin, which were of two shapes: either round like a butter-box, or elongated, one part of which slid into the other like a drawer. When pulled halfway out it opened a little window for taking out the snuff; when moved back, the window would close. The oblong snuff boxes, made from plain tin, with yellow brass moldings at the end and around the window, had a capacity of half a round of Greater Polish cheese. They were used even by wealthy people, although the greater nobility preferred snuff boxes made out of silver or mother of pearl.

After this came tin snuff boxes, red lacquered ones, and round ones with artwork painted on some part of them. The latter snuff boxes, even though they were made of inferior material, because they were decorated

with art, soon appeared in the Nuremberg shops,³²⁷ and fell into such favor that people gave up silver and pearl ones for them. At the beginning, they served only the gentry, who paid as much as twelve ducats apiece for them. But once lacquered snuff boxes became the province of the nobility, the more of them came to be manufactured, and the more they dropped in price, and once they had become commonplace among the populace, the lords and the wealthy came to despise them. With their price falling from twelve ducats to a single złoty, they became the haberdashery of cab-drivers and domestics, but not for long. Becoming a commodity in weak demand, before six years had passed they had completely disappeared from the market.

Next in line after red lacquered boxes were black ones made of papier-maché and, after them, ones of pure tortoise shell, appliquéd on the outside with papier-maché in various colors, making them more resilient to breaking than they otherwise would have been. Then there were ones made of porcelain, copper, porcelain-on-copper cloisonné or of junk metal. Finally, among the nobility and the truly rich, pure gold ones were prized, made in various styles, their intricate masterwork adding to the already high cost of the metal. At last royals and the greater gentry could count among their precious possessions snuff boxes encrusted with diamonds. But they were not so much used for snuff as they were fodder for pick-pockets. Actually, most of them adorned noble treasure chests and safes, whence they made their way as gifts into the hands of friends or performers of great favors, or to the first bearers of long-awaited good tidings, and that sort of thing, along with watches and signet rings. Signet rings with tiny portraits under glass or hidden beneath a precious stone came into style alongside diamond-studded snuff boxes. Such portraits, the size of a schilling, were called miniatures. Usually they depicted kings, princes, great generals, or ladies of renowned beauty, and were mounted in a circle of diamonds.



³²⁷ For Nuremberg stores, see note 284 above.



OF BAGS AND WATCHES, RINGS AND PINS

A fairly routine chapter on certain aspects of men's and women's haberdashery. Indirectly, Kitowicz raises the question of Polish sumptuary customs, regulating the clothing of people according to social status. If one is to believe Kitowicz, Jewish women, possibly intentionally circumventing them, wore so-called red złotys worked into their clothing as a not very subtle sign of prosperity.

O.E.S.

What follows now should have been placed next to the chapters on dress, as that would be its logical place and rightful connection with my pen's chosen material. But since it did not come to mind then, let it reside here.

I do not intend to describe here bags of grain which, as I understand it, were and always will be of a single sort; rather I undertake to describe bags for money. Among simpler folk they were made mostly of sheep or goat scrotums, or from the skins of weasel, squirrel, or eel. Among the nobility and burgher class they were of chamois and had spring-operated clasps that opened and shut without a key. As to shape, they were round and longish. Such dandies as wanted to have everything in the latest style preferred fabric purses embroidered with silver and gold, endeavoring in this way to project a good impression of themselves by having a rich purse, even if often empty.

Toward the end of August III's reign, as silk purses came on the scene, all of the wealthier people adopted them as being more convenient, while the chamois, weasel, and other kinds mentioned above continued to be used by the masses. Fabric purses, for their part, seeming now a needless expense, getting no respect, and not being durable besides, fell completely out of use.

Clocks and Watches

Tower clocks, and clocks in noble homes and in those of richer burghers existed in Poland well before the reign of the two Augusts, and maybe even before the Zygmunts.³²⁸ However, wooden wall clocks in provincial homes, especially in the homes of priests, had their beginning under August III. They were crafted by Saxon millers, and although the craftsmanship was shoddy at first, they could cost as much as three red złotys; later the price fell to sixteen ordinary złotys. Such clocks hung on walls with the weights hanging down. As an additional feature some, but not all, had a cuckoo bird along with them whose cuckoos corresponded to the hours on the clock. The chime was typically of glass and the hammer of wood, and it gave out a more pleasant sound than if it had been made of brass.

At the beginning of August III's reign, breast and pocket watches of both silver and gold could be found, but only among the great lords, a sign that they had only recently come into existence, and they were rather clunky in proportion to the ones used nowadays. Almost all of the first ones had chimes that struck the hour, and they were carried in a pocket by both men and women without chains, but rather secured by a tape or ribbon. And since these chiming watches often broke, and since no watchmakers were to be found other than in Gdańsk or Warsaw, people abandoned chiming watches and went over to quieter ones, less susceptible to breaking.

Slowly, watches began to appear more thickly among those of both noble and burgher status. A wealthy nobleman, an officer in the army, a treasury official, jurist, or rich merchant carried a watch, and when he conspicuously took it out in a crowd and consulted the time, he was immediately taken for a person of substance.

Watches acquired greater prominence by adding silver, gold, steel, or pot-metal chains to them, polished to a shine, to which, for greater show, a bundle of fobs or charms of various shapes and sizes would be added, ranging from tiny to as large as half an inch or more. These charms might represent little dogs, cats, birds, horses, and so on, or be signs of vari-

328 That is, Zygmunt the Old (reigned 1506–1548) and Zygmunt August (reigned 1548–1572).

ous instruments or costume: hats, caps, books, masons' trowels, artillery pieces, pistols, and the like, and the more one had of such charms, the more greatly one was held in esteem. At the same time that chains were added to watches they began to be worn not in the pocket but out in the open. Men dressed Polish-style would place their watch over their kontusz, in the depression right beneath the chest, with the chain hanging out over the kontusz, while men in German dress wore their watch in a special pocket for it in the right front of their trousers, with the chain hanging out just like with the Poles, so that its fobs showed. Later on, Poles wore their watches in their żupans beneath the kontusz, in a separate pocket on the right, with the chain worn as before, outside, so as to show who, in his cleverness, had ruined his żupan. At last this accoutrement was transferred to the trousers, German-style, for by then German trousers had been adopted universally, the old Polish-style pants having been tossed aside.

Ladies wore their watches on the outside at the waist, fastening them by a large elongated clasp from which the watch hung outside the skirt. The clasps were made of silver, gold, or gold-plated plain metal, and were polished and decorated with various figures. By the end of August III's reign watches had become so commonplace that one could see them being worn by lackeys, coachmen, and other people of court and town, but the ones they had were of that first manufacture, despised and abandoned by lords and wealthier persons and passed on to their servants and the poor, just like old shoes.

Having come to despise silver watches as too common, people undertook to distinguish themselves with gold watches and, when they, too, began to multiply, they began to encrust them with precious stones—diamonds and others—with which the less well-off gentry could no longer compete. But the Nuremberg shop-keepers and enterprising goldsmiths invented a way to imitate genuine, expensive eastern stones with Czech rhinestones, and when a watch encrusted with Czech rhinestones glimmered just as brightly as one encrusted with real gemstones, there was no longer any superficial difference between a watch costing a dozen or so red złotych and one costing several hundred. For which reason in the end the value and popularity of a lord's watch turned on the quality of the watch itself, no longer so much on its decoration. Not that costly diamond-stud-

ded watches were cast aside by the great lords or, particularly, by monarchs and potentates. Detaching them from their costume, of which previously they had been as much a part as the gold coins which, up until the present day, are a part of a Jewish woman's costume, they kept them in caskets about their chambers and dressing rooms and made presents of them to dignitaries, using them out of thrift instead of money. For it is seemlier to bestow on someone a gem-encrusted watch worth some one or two hundred ducats than to give him that much in cash (or, if necessity should so dictate, an even greater amount), when one can get by with a lesser amount in the form of a watch.

Rings and Pins

To have on one's finger a diamond ring and a diamond stick pin at one's neck, or one of some other such stone, was the sign of a young lord or fashionable courtier, and when such rings glistened on both hands, then so much the better. Even should a person be dressed as smartly as possible, without such decoration he would be taken for a person of no account, but merely for an ordinary citizen or a stay-at-home without any taste. For which reason, whoever could not afford genuine diamonds adorned himself with Czech, Głogów, or Biłgoraj rhinestones. For in night-time company, any old piece of glass takes on the shine of the sparkling candles; and in fact there were few jewelers in the country who, at a single glance, could distinguish a real gemstone from a fake one.

Besides rings, which were usually worn on the middle finger, men would place on their thumb a kind of gold or silver-plated band as a sign that the person was an experienced fencing master, although more than one coward successfully paraded under such a sign just because no one accosted him.

Ladies also adorned themselves richly in rings, sometimes putting two or three on the same finger. They did not wear pins at the neck, because they wore their necks exposed; but instead of pins they hung around their necks golden necklaces, strings of pearls, or slender satin ribbons decorated with cut diamonds from which hung a golden cross across the breast, set with a rich stone. At the beginning of August III's reign coral necklaces were in fashion, to be driven out by pearl ones, until finally they were

abandoned altogether and left to the wives and daughters of city folk and Jewish women. Noble ladies for their part placed more value than in corals in waxed pearls³²⁹ drawn together into the shape of some kind of stable and bright composition.



³²⁹ Waxed pearls are glass beads sprayed or dipped in, or filled with, a pearlescent material.



HOUSEHOLD ENTERTAINMENTS

A recurring theme in Kitowicz is the arrogance, excesses, and essential lawlessness of the magnate class, and he cannot resist alluding to it in this otherwise carefree description of simple country pastimes and pleasures: the magnates alone do not allow hunting without permission in their fields and forests. Although in theory all gentry were equal, according to the saying "szlachcic na zagrodzie równy wojewodzie" (a squire on his plot is equal to a palatine), in practice there was a huge disparity in wealth and political influence between the magnateria, i.e., the truly wealthy, who could own vast lands, multiple palaces, tributary villages, and even personal armies, and the gentleman farmer, the poorer of whom differed from the peasantry mainly in having a coat of arms, a saber, and an elevated sense of self-worth. This passage gives a rather uninspiring picture of the life of the country gentlewoman, given over to various forms of needlecraft.

O.E.S.

Women of noble status entertained themselves with sewing, embroidery on a frame or hoop, and also by knitting socks. Ladies of high birth most of all practiced macramé with thin white thread which they used for a head-dress instead of lace, and also for aprons. Beyond this, certain pious ladies made surplices, chasubles,³³⁰ and communion cloths for churches. The same occupation was practiced by wealthy ladies in the city.

Men for the most part enjoyed hunting, as everyone was permitted in everyone else's forests the same as in their own; no one would forbid

³³⁰ A surplice is a white liturgical vestment; a chasuble is the outmost garment worn by a priest at Communion.

a neighbor from hunting, unless it was maybe some interloper from ten boundaries away that was tromping over one's fields and forests. However, great lords did not allow such freedom, provided by law for everyone, and drove away and beat up such as who dared to practice their hunting in the lord's forest, often enough resulting in murder followed by legal proceedings.

After a day of hunting, gentlemen would spend their evenings going over the fortunes of the hunt, accompanied by a mug of beer along with cards, checkers, or dice. The same routine was followed on holy days, when it was not fitting to hunt, and at other times not well suited to hunting.

Young people of both sexes played various respectable games in the evening hours, mostly on days of solemnity, in order to while away the empty hours. These games took place in the presence of older people who kept watch over their decorousness and derived satisfaction from observing their youthful frivolity. Sometimes they even joined in the games themselves alongside the young people. One such game was blind-lady's bluff,³³¹ where a blindfolded person would chase about the room until he or she caught another of the players, while the other players would scatter about the room and call out to the blind lady and, as soon as they did, they would rush off to another place as fast as they could, making catching them difficult. The boy or girl who was caught then had to run around the room blindfolded until they caught someone else.

Another game was questions and answers. For example, the question would be "What is straw good for?" and each person had to answer in turn, round after round, and as the number of answers grew—and one was not allowed to repeat an answer—it got more and more difficult, until, when someone couldn't give a quick answer, he or she had to forfeit a pledge which, as soon as the game was over, they had to redeem by performing some act of penance which the person sitting next to them would specify. The penance was formulated in allegorical terms known only to the initiated, so as to cause trouble and embarrassment to the outsider. For example, a person would be ordered to bring a hot coal in their ear, when the ear of a key was meant; or a girl would be asked to show a private part or a bare knee, which meant showing one's eye or elbow. If a girl couldn't figure out

³³¹ In Polish, ślepa babka (blind old woman).

what was meant she would take off running, after which the others, having had a good laugh at her expense, would tell her what she should have shown. With these and other such pastimes young people whiled away the evening hours when no better entertainment presented itself.





OF CARNIVALS AND KULIGS

Under Kitowicz's pen, the celebrated old Polish custom of the kulig, or sleigh party, comes across looking more like a marauding band of country gluttons, drunkards and thugs, kidnapping and terrorizing their well-to-do neighbors and eating them out of house and home. These days, kuligs are mostly a winter entertainment put on for the benefit of tourists or, where still practiced as a custom, look more like the American hayride, where young people are carted around in wagons strewn with straw, singing songs and canoodling, to end up around a campfire. Poles still do participate enthusiastically in Carnival entertainment and masked balls. The Carnival masquerade described here looks rather unsavory from our modern perspective, as we see the nobility deriving merriment from pretending to be Jews, Gypsies, or peasants for a day. To judge how deeply Kitowicz has woven himself into the fabric of today's vision of eighteenth-century Poland, it is instructive to look at descriptions of old Polish customs on the Internet, which often follow Kitowicz's descriptions almost to the letter, without necessarily giving him a word of credit.

O.E.S.

The great lords and wealthy aristocracy entertained themselves with banquets and dances the whole year round, inviting to their homes guests on such varied occasions as Christmas, Easter, Pentecost,³³² name-days, christenings, engagements, and weddings. However, the greatest number of such entertainments were held beginning with Fat Thursday (the Thursday before Lent) and lasting until Ash Wednesday. Often enough, however, they would get carried away and, while still

³³² Pentecost, in Polish *Zielone Świątki* (Green Holidays), the relic of an ancient Slavic fertility festival held in late May.

observing meatless meals, they would violate even Ash Wednesday with dances and drinking, and go on even through Thursday, barely ceasing their frivolity on the first Friday of Lent, on which day a service dedicated to the Heart of the Lord Jesus was strictly observed. On that day, then, they no longer dared to dance, but as for drink they had no mind to stop, drenching their Lenten fare with all kinds, as if by way of cleansing their throats of the fatty dishes eaten during Shrovetide.³³³

However, in bishops' and other ecclesiastical homes,³³⁴ dances did not last longer than until the dawn of Ash Wednesday, and only then in places where young folk would be stretching their legs, and the host was a mild and lenient observer of the church calendar and did not want to spoil the young people's merriment, looking the other way at such violence done to the holy fast, as long as these indefatigable youths did not want to stop on their own. In the homes of the more scrupulous (among whom Sierakowski, bishop of Przemyśl, later archbishop of Lwów was foremost), from Tuesday going into Wednesday no foot was permitted to take a dance step. As soon as the midnight hour struck, the music shut down and the company had to disperse to bed. The same rigor was applied in secular households burdened by age and more disposed to piety than to pleasures of the world, particularly when the lord or lady, or both of them together, would be members of a tertiary order.³³⁵

Such entertainments took place in noble homes among invited guests. The gentry of lower fortune conducted so-called *kuligs*, or sleigh-parties, which looked as follows. Two or three neighbors would conspire among themselves and take along with them their wives, daughters, sons, servants—in short, everyone in the household—leaving behind no one other than small children left in the care of an older man or woman. They would pack them all together into sleighs or, if there weren't enough sleighs, then into carts, carriages, wagons—whatever they had—and drive off to the nearest neighbor without any invitation or warning, so that he would not

333 Shrovetide: the Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday preceding Ash Wednesday.

334 Bishops and clergy took part in carnival along with the rest and, as one sees here, even fostered it by hosting parties themselves.

335 Tertiary religious orders consisted of lay men and women who did not take religious vows but who participated in the good works of a religious order and might be allowed to wear at least some elements of the order's habit and, especially, to be buried in it. See in the chapter "On Piety."

be able to hide or escape. Catching him unawares, they would unceremoniously demand food and drink for both people and horses, just like foraging soldiers until, having satiated themselves and having cleaned out the man's cellars, pantries, and granaries, eating every last scrap they could find, they would kidnap the luckless soul and take him along with them together with his entire family and household, and travel on to the next neighbor, where they would do the same thing, and then to the next, until at last they would arrive back at the homes of those who had started the kulig. They for their part would tend to be of the least prosperous sort, but instead notorious guzzlers, having no cellars of their own full of drink, nor pantries bursting with food. And so they would not entertain for very long in their own homes the company who, by then, would have already grown weary of taking out their gluttony on other houses.

These kuligs normally began in the next-to-last week of Carnival and lasted until Ash Wednesday. Since such kuligs were mainly oriented around drunkenness and gluttony, and therefore less around dancing, they could make do with any sort of fiddler, sometimes abducted from a tavern or discovered among the household help—that is, unless the host had his own household band or, in a fit of enthusiasm, sent to town for one. The most notorious kuligs as to drink and bravado took place in the Rawa voivodeship, where they were often accompanied by bloodshed and, if some outsider inadvertently became caught up in a kulig only to regret it later, when his constitution couldn't stand up to the drinking, the rest would beat him like a rug, tear his clothes to shreds, and drive him away as having been judged too frail to keep such stalwart company.

With or without a kulig, on the devil-days of Carnival (for that was how one referred to the last three days of Carnival), people would dress in costumes and transform themselves into various figures. Men would dress up as Jews, Gypsies, itinerant tradesmen, peasants, or vagabonds, while women in similar fashion would dress up as Jewesses, Gypsy women, peasant women, or women of easy virtue, imitating in word and gesture the people they were pretending to be. On the last Tuesday of Carnival, one of the company would dress up as a priest, using a shirt for a surplice, and hanging a wide sash belt around his neck in place of a priest's stole. He would get up on a stool in a corner of the room, concealed up to his waist by a carpet nailed to the wall as if standing in a pulpit, and deliver a ser-

mon on some humorous subject, by way of capping off the dances and bidding farewell to Carnival festivities.

After a meat-filled supper on the last Tuesday, around midnight a meal of milk, eggs, and herring would be served, by means of these dishes adapting to the fast that was to follow, as if gradually getting used to going without meat and getting by only on white stuff. This meatless supper was called *podkurek* (cock's crow), and it was in fashion in the great houses as well as in the more modest.

In larger towns on Ash Wednesday, the members of guilds would dress up as beggars and Gypsies, decking out one of their number as a bear, covered in fur and wearing a black sheepskin coat with the fur turned inside out, tied by the leg. They would lead him from house to house, and the "bear" would perform various tricks with which they would wheedle small change and drinks from people interested enough to watch them. Others would fix a big block of wood to a chain, grab a marriageable woman and harness her to it, which she would have to drag from house to house until they caught the next one, and could release the first. This custom was said to have been initiated by a spurned suitor, and it became the universal punishment for grown women who had not yet married, as much as they might have wanted to.

Similar pranks were practiced in the villages among village lads and lasses, especially on the last Tuesday before Lent. One custom was for the village boys to haul around a large wooden rooster placed on two small wheels with a stick in place of a wagon tongue, inviting the women and girls to take a ride. They, understanding the ceremony, would instead give them cheese, butter, pork fat, sausages, and eggs, from which they were truly able to put together a sumptuous feast, after buying enough vodka and beer to go along with it—for that part was never missing.

Around churches on Ash Wednesday, school-boys would lie in wait for members of the fair sex entering church, onto whose clothing they would try to pin chicken legs, egg shells, turkey necks, soup bones, and other such junk, the point being to do it so skillfully that the person getting it didn't notice, for the trash was tied to a string or thread affixed to a crooked pin like a fishhook, so that it took only a flash for a boy adept at such tricks to pin it on her. The lady for her part, beautifully dressed and often of a distinguished family, would march into church with dignified

bearing, all the while carrying the joke on her back, causing empty-headed merriment until, being freed of the dangling ornament by some considerate person, she would have to blush in front of all of them.

Comber

In Kraków alone there was a custom called *comber*,³³⁶ such that on the Thursday before Lent women street vendors would have a party. They would hire musicians, bring all sorts of food and drink, and right in the middle of the market square, even if it was covered with mud, they would dance and try to grab male passers-by and get them to dance with them. Some poor wretches and paupers would allow themselves to be caught just for a bite of food and a gulp of wine. More distinguished gentlemen happening upon the comber by accident preferred to pay their way out of it rather than to leap around in the mud with a bunch of old women.



³³⁶ The so-called *babski comber* (women's' night out) is a tradition going back to the late middle ages and, contra Kitowicz, besides Kraków has also been mentioned in connection with the Poznań area. The etymology of the word is unclear, but it is seemingly from German. Today the tradition is experiencing a sort of revival, as hotels on "Fat Thursday" organize events to which only women are invited, leaving their husbands at home to do the housework.



MASKED BALLS

The masked ball, held during Carnival time before Easter, allowed the old nobility and the rich upper middle classes to mix together socially on a level playing field—as long as the latter did not remove their masks. Kitowicz leaves almost no stone unturned in this discussion of the importation into Poland from Italy of this gaudy custom, an event which apparently took off like wildfire in the capital, and from there throughout the country. Although Kitowicz attributes their introduction to Poland in the eighteenth century, tradition holds that they were brought to Poland along with other Italian customs by queen Bona Sforza of Milan (1494–1557), second wife of Zygmunt Stary (Sigismund the Old). Kitowicz's Warsaw-centric attitude is plainly visible in this colorful piece, as he takes virtual pride in the city population's sophisticated skill in pursuing a dissipated life style, as compared, say, to the stuffy part of Greater Poland around Poznań. One cannot fail to wonder how the author came by his expert knowledge of practically all aspects of this carnival celebration, as his attention roves from the specific prices of beverages and food to how excretory functions and carnal urges were dealt with.

O.E.S.

Masked balls first appeared in Warsaw in the middle years of the reign of August III, at first only in one place for all of Warsaw, and only during Carnival, beginning with the New Year and lasting until Ash Wednesday, two times a week: on Tuesday and Thursday. It was introduced and maintained for more than a dozen years single-handedly by a man called Salvador, an Italian by birth, but a resident of Warsaw. By the end of August's reign, masked balls, which had formerly been known only to the nobility, began to draw the common folk, and a single place became too small for them, so that Mr. Salvador began to be

emulated by people who, modeling themselves on his masked balls, began to establish others in various locales, and they began to expand not only in number but also as to frequency. At first they were held during the six weeks before Advent, and just before Lent during Carnival, as mentioned above. Then, so that people might enjoy them to the full, they began to add more days during the week: Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Merry-makers barely gave themselves time to rest on Friday and Saturday. It was no longer enough to enjoy masked balls in a single spot, but people would go from one to the next, paying everywhere the *entrée*, or entrance fee. If someone intended to return to one he had left, he would report to the manager and take from him a ticket entitling him to return without paying a second *entrée*.

It was not done to enter a masked ball either with a weapon or without a mask. However, if a person were a top-ranking nobleman, he could remove his mask if he wanted, or not even put one on his face at all, but for the sake of appearances he could attach it to his arm near his shoulder, or poke it beneath his hat or cap. The purpose of the mask was to preserve the principle of equality among those gathered and taking part in the merriment for the same amount of money, without any disrespect or blot on anyone's honor. A man of lower rank, if he took off his mask, excluded himself by so doing from keeping company with his betters. However, for as long as he remained hidden beneath his mask, no one could despise him or do him any harm, even should he be a person of known ill repute, without bringing on himself the rigors of the Marshal's Courts,³³⁷ under whose protection and well-paid-for permission the masked balls took place, ruled by their own customs just as if they had the force of basic law behind them. A cobbler, tailor, or other tradesman, as long as he was concealed behind a mask, could carouse on an equal basis with the nobility. The moment he took off his mask and tried to become more familiar with his social betters, he would immediately be compromised.

In addition to the mass of people of either sex who, for the reason just mentioned, never took off their masks, other distinguished persons also walked about in their masks, not wanting to be recognized—a husband, say, spying on his wife, or a lover keeping an eye on his mistress (or the

337 See the chapter "The Marshal's Courts."

other way around), to see who he or she was dancing with. Those who had nothing to hide, or no reason to spy, generally took off their mask after one or two promenades about the rooms, in order to breathe more comfortably.

There were three things to do at a masked ball: dance, play cards, and watch other people. Walking back and forth about the rooms, the various “masks” would confront one another and engage them in talk, trying to guess who was hiding behind the mask, while the other person, trying to hide his or her identity, would shake their head and mumble in a different voice, pretending not to be the person for whom they were taken. This was especially the entertainment of women, when they were not dancing.

Masked balls were most crowded at the beginning and at the end. The more popular ones could be beset upon by as many as five hundred masked couples, of whom about fifty would go out to dance, not counting those who, in a slightly smaller ballroom, would be dancing various foreign dances. An armchair was set out in the dance hall for the pair that was next in line to join the dance. If a man wanted to put himself forward as next, he endeavored to situate the lady with whom he was to dance on this chair and take up a position standing alongside her. Once he had done this, which was no easy matter, no one could take precedence over him. Toward the middle of the evening, when people began to have their fill of the entertainment, there was no longer a throng. By that time, it was mostly people looking at their cards at gaming tables that were left. The more distinguished ladies, no doubt for reason of some indisposition of health, would already have left.

The price of admission to a masked ball entitled everyone universally to: lamplight and the orchestra. For anything extra—for example, if someone had need of sustenance, it was bought at extravagant prices. Not so much as a glass of water was given away for free. It cost twelve groschen, and one had to stand by the booth where it was sold to drink it. If one wanted to transport it to a different room, one paid as much as for water flavored with something. A half-quart glass of lemonade was a *tymf*;³³⁸ a smaller glass of almond drink was also a *tymf*. A cup of tea cost twelve groschen, a cup of coffee a *tymf*, a cup of hot chocolate two *tymfs*. Domes-

338 The *tymf* was the colloquial name for the silver zloty, in circulation in Poland since 1663, named after Andrzej Tymf, head of the royal mint under Jan II Kazimierz Wasa (reigned 1648–1668).

tic beer was not in fashion at masked balls; only a country bumpkin would try to order it. A quart bottle of English beer was four tymfs; the same-size bottle of French wine for mixing with water was two tymfs. Fairly ordinary Hungarian wine was eight tymfs a bottle, while a better one cost one red złoty. A bottle of champagne was also one red złoty, and of Rhine wine the same. A bottle of burgundy was nine tymfs. A baked capon was a talar, and a couple of spiced pheasants cost a red złoty. A joint of roast veal cost a talar. Served on individual plates as chops and with a French roll it cost an additional tymf per person. Roast beef and other such common dishes were not served. Whoever wanted a full hot meal could get one for a red złoty. If a person wanted a meal of cold-cuts only, he could get whatever he wanted—ham, tongue, head cheese, and so on, by paying by the item.

No one's servants were allowed to enter the balls, because there was no need of any service beyond eating and drinking, which is what the staff of the impresario, that is, the host of the ball, were for. If anyone should need his servant for any urgent business, he could leave the hall and call for him, but not beyond the guardhouse by the entryway, for if he went any farther than that, he would not be let back in, but would have to buy a new ticket. Lest the eaters, drinkers, and dancers have nothing to use for nature's needs, a single room near the ballroom was full of toilet chairs and a shelf of urinals, where guests could relieve themselves of nature's burdens.

A detachment of Crown Guards stood watch over every masked ball at the entry: four soldiers outside the door and two by the door itself, while one officer stood watch in the middle of the ballroom to ensure peace and propriety. Anyone making a commotion would immediately be evicted by the officer and his men. Once outside, if he were wearing a mask, he would have to remove it. The officer took his measure of the person and acted in accordance with his own best judgment. If the person escorted beyond the door were a person of known ill repute, he would be remanded to the lock-up in order to have a bit of rest after his ballroom fatigue; either that or he would be caned on the spot. If the rabble-rouser were a man of virtue, the officer, without inquiring into the details, would simply punish him by excluding him from the night's entertainment. Those with whom he was quarrelling could take it up with him on the following morning, either through the courts or in a duel. The latter course was most often followed when, in the course of the quarrel, a dishonor or affront had been

done to a lady. In this way, bloodshed was avoided at the masked balls, for everyone was unarmed, and as soon as a dispute broke out it was quashed by the soldiers. Propriety was upheld with even greater rigor in that not only the soldiers, but the revelers themselves would see to the expulsion from the party of anyone who dared to commit any rashness or affront to public decency, with a goodly supply of bruises to go along with it.

To be sure, young people had other ways of affronting public decency. In addition to the public ballrooms and chambers, open to the entire gathering, the impressarios maintained separate rooms under lock and key. A young masked cavalier would ask for the key to a separate room, giving the man five, six, or even more red zlotys, saying that he wanted to share a bottle with a friend or have a friendly game of cards. The impresario, without inquiring into the details of the matter—for he well understood what it was for and was even its expeditor—would hand over the key, and the cavalier, gliding hither and thither about the rooms and public places with the person of his attentions, would little by little lead her to the room to which he had the key. Locking the door for a while and conducting their tête-à-tête, the couple would later emerge to rejoin the company. This went on only in the masked balls of less worthy reputation and had nothing to do with the essence of the balls themselves, but were the invention of the impressarios as a means of increasing profit; and it did not occur other than in Warsaw, where there were spacious palaces to be rented for the balls. All other entertainments were respectable; what happened behind closed doors can only be imagined.

Another means of enjoying indecent pleasure was the following. All through the night along the road in front of the palace ballroom carriages stood for hire, for bringing and taking away the revelers. A man who might want to steal another man's wife—or daughter—for an hour or so would steal out of the ball with her, easy enough to do in a crowd. They would get into a carriage and betake themselves to one or the other's house, or they would simply order the coachman to drive around for a while in some remote back streets, after which they would return to the ball just as they had left, entering one after the other and separately joining the company, amongst whom the whole time the husband would have been searching for his wife, or a mother for her daughter. "And where have you been?" she would ask, having found her. "Oh, nowhere," she would

boldly reply. "I was just dancing and then had a walk about the rooms." At this the inquisition would have to come to an end, without anything ever coming to light. Such licentiousness was only the kernel of the wantonness that took firm root and multiplied under the reign of August's successor, Stanisław August.

For those playing cards, for every card table, whether it was needed for a long time or short, one had to pay the impressario two red złotych in advance before sitting down to play—and for such payment the person renting the table got candles for illuminating the table and a single deck of cards which, after play was over, he had to leave on the table together with the candlesticks and snuffer. The same payment was due even when the player or the banker did not play with anyone. It was enough that he had ordered a table and cards. And it happened more than once that, when many had purchased a table, and a person could not attract anyone to play with him, after sitting for an hour or so in vain, he went to seek his fortune elsewhere, at some other masked ball, or he simply went to join the dancing.

Having had a taste of the Warsaw masked balls, men and women who had visited the capital dispersed the fashion all over the country. By the end of August's reign such balls were known in Poznań, Leszno, Lwów, and Wilno. I cannot say whether it was the truth or just bragging, but people said that masked balls at Carnival cost less in the city with one's wife and daughters than out in the country, where one had to treat a whole circle of friends, including their people and horses, keeping them satisfied with drink, prematurely ruining one's health. Calculations could sometimes go badly awry when, not being content with ordinary masked-ball entertainment, they would conspire and arrange among themselves such pranks as these: one person would assume the role of a cook, along with his wife and daughters; another would be a baker, a third a purveyor of meat pies, a fourth a confectioner, a fifth a coffee broker, a sixth a vintner, and yet another a dealer in various sundries. And so these madcaps, arranging it among themselves, would give away for free to everyone who came all those victuals, drinks, and sundries as if at a general assembly or market, pretending that it was on credit, deriving pleasure from indiscriminately stuffing with delicacies the stomachs of people they often did not even know and who were not even worthy of being received by them. One or

two hundred red zlotys could be tossed away in a single night. Wiser men were they who frequented such make-believe taverns and storehouses—eating, drinking, and profiting at the cost of another person's stupidity.

Masked balls were not very numerous in Poznań, for the nobility did not like to mix with the middle class, and in any case no single county around there had that many noblemen in it, so the balls were not crowded. By contrast, gatherings in the city there were more thickly attended, attracting especially the younger nobility, who were welcomed out of respect for their higher rank by the bourgeoisie, who took it as an honor that noble sons would deign to mix with their daughters, whom the noble houses considered unworthy of their acquaintance. Those city entertainments were not masked balls, but rather arranged get-togethers.





OF DRINKS AND DRINKING

This description could have been purposely written to illustrate the Saxon couplet: "Za króla Sasa jedz, pij a popuszczaj pasa!" (under the Saxon king, eat, drink, and loosen your belt!). It is but one of four chapters primarily devoted to drink, drinking, drunkards, and drunkenness, knowledge accumulated from a lifetime of observance, note-taking and, it would be impossible not to surmise, participation; and the subject of drink is liberally sprinkled throughout the Description, almost no matter what the topic. With the practiced eye of a cultural anthropologist, Kitowicz pays as much attention to the instruments for imbibing as to the process itself. One cannot help but wonder how much the author exaggerates as to what extent the country actually was, as it seems to have been from this description, awash in alcohol from early morning until late at night, accompanying virtually all activities of whatever sort at all levels of society. Equally impressive for the modern reader is the great variety of alcoholic beverages Kitowicz catalogues, both by type and geographical origin, that were readily available in mid-eighteenth-century Poland to those that could afford them.

Kitowicz's criticisms of the drinking habit are of a practical bent. He pokes fun at excessive coffee-drinkers and their baseless belief in the health properties of the beverage, but at the same time he concedes that alcohol is harder on the health.

In describing the reality of how, in order to get any political business done on any level, it was necessary to ply all parties to the discussion with copious supplies of alcohol, he portrays the situation not so much as a criticism of society and its institutions (he lets the reader draw that conclusion for him or herself), but as pointing to the practical need to surround oneself with supporters having a strong head for drink.

Drinks among the greater gentry were what one would expect: tea in the morning, sometimes with milk, sometimes without, but always with sugar, followed by goldwasser,³³⁹ prosecco,³⁴⁰ cinnamon or double-strength anise liqueur, ratafia,³⁴¹ or krambambula.³⁴² These last two were the most expensive, and could be purchased for a *tymf* a glassful, holding four ounces.³⁴³ After having a glass all around, people would eat fruit preserves or gingerbread cookies,³⁴⁴ followed by bread and butter or sugar crisps, followed again by a round of vodka. If breakfast were to precede dinner, as happened around Carnival time, then it consisted of a baked capon or two, according to the number of people; chops and roasts with pepper and butter; steaks fried in butter and ginger; or sausage and hunter's stew,³⁴⁵ after which one cooled off with a glass of beer or water. Sometimes it was topped off with a goblet of wine while people waited for the afternoon meal, entertaining themselves with conversation, cards, checkers, chess, or a stroll. Among the lesser gentry, instead of goldwasser, distilled homebrew served just as well, with fruit preserves fried in honey and the same kind of gingerbread cookies and rusks, but made by the esquire carver's or cupbearer's³⁴⁶ wife and her daughters along with the servant girls, and it was just as good as, or even better than, those goldwassers and Italian preserves bought so expensively.

After-dinner drinks among the greater gentry would be Hungarian wine in the Kraków and Sandomierz districts and in Ruthenia,³⁴⁷ while in Prussia, Kujawia,³⁴⁸ and Lithuania, French and other imported wines

339 For goldwasser, see note 220.

340 *prosecco*: a still widely-marketed Italian sparkling wine, a rival of French champagne.

341 *ratafia*: a liqueur flavoured with lemon peel and various herbs and spices.

342 *krambambula*: a generic term referring to mulled wine or various other alcoholic concoctions of that sort. It is said to be the national drink of Belarus.

343 The term is *pół ćwierci kwaterki* (half a quarter of a quart), a quart being one quarter of a *garniec*: 3.77 liters in Greater Poland. For *tymf*, see note 338.

344 *pierniki toruńskie* (gingerbread cookies) have been baked in Toruń since the Middle Ages.

345 *bigos*: see note 268.

346 *stolnik* (esquire carver) and *podczaszny* (cup-bearer) were antique and, by the eighteenth century, essentially meaningless hereditary titles deriving from ancient duties once performed at court. In the present context, the description identifies the people as middle gentry.

347 Ruthenia is roughly the territory to the north of Ukraine and south of Lithuania now known as Belarus.

348 Kujawy is an agriculturally fertile ethnic and geographical region north-west of Warsaw.

such as pontac,³⁴⁹ muscatel, or Szczecin wine³⁵⁰ would be drunk. Around Poznań and Kalisz, where the gentry and nobility are thrifty in everything, Hungarian wine is drunk by the better class, while in Ukraine they drink Romanian or monastery wine. To a very limited extent, Champagnes came into fashion, often served to “round off” a Hungarian wine. Burgundy was drunk cut with water by the greater gentry who, already being educated to French ways, did not drink beer. And some ladies and gentlemen would take a glass of Rhine wine as an aid to digestion.

However, once coffee appeared and came into use among the households of the nobility, richer gentry, and affluent townsfolk, it was the first thing offered each morning, served with milk and sugar, followed by vodka. Tea, supposedly causing consumption and cooling the stomach, was completely cast aside and relegated to the status of a medicine against fever and for coughing up sputum after a bout of heavy drinking. At every table, guests were served coffee. Some would take it with milk, others without. This drink was favored especially by women, whether in the morning, after the mid-day meal, in the evening, or as they sat late into the night at a dance. If one of the men wanted to skip alcohol, he would get up from the table and head for the coffee, for it was said that the virtue of coffee was that he who drank it would not be harmed by wine. However, this virtue was said to last for only two hours or so, but that was good enough, especially if it was bad wine that was being served.

Coffee at last spread from people of means to the common folk. As coffee houses sprung up about the towns, cobblers, tailors, tradesmen and tradeswomen, teamsters, all the way down to the last riffraff would head for coffee. It was not expensive then. For six copper groschen one could get a cup of coffee with milk and sugar—yes, but what kind: one part coffee for the aroma, four parts roasted wheat, a dollop of farina sugar,³⁵¹ and a spoonful of milk diluted with water, but it tasted good enough to simple folk who did not know the taste of real coffee well made. Even among

349 *pontac*: a kind of claret named after its producer, Arnaud de Pontacq (1530–1605), an erstwhile prominent politician from the Bordeaux district.

350 Improbably, land around Szczecin in West Pomerania on the Baltic Sea had a climate and soil propitious for wine-growing. With global warming, the cultivation of wine grapes around Szczecin has recently been reintroduced.

351 Farina sugar is a grain-derived, unrefined, sugary brown paste.

poorer households and the stingy, they would make some sort of coffee, half out of roasted wheat or peas, because they just had to have coffee; without it a home would be considered uncouth and miserly. Coffee leads people to addiction just the same as liquor or tobacco, so that in the end one cannot do without it, to the extent that a man, and even more so a woman, would rather go without bread than to give up coffee.

In the towns, especially the German ones, craftsmen didn't begrudge money spent on coffee, and they even saved on expenses by doing so. Before coffee was known, a craftsman had to give an apprentice a glass of vodka, which cost three groschen, then bread and butter, which was another three, so breakfast for each person cost him six groschen, of which he himself didn't get a taste. However, when coffee came into fashion, the craftsman bought coffee already roasted and ground in a spice store for six groschen, crystal sugar for another six, and half a gallon of milk for another six groschen. The coffee was made with the milk bought for six groschen, and he gave everyone a lump of crystal sugar which they placed between their teeth and sipped the coffee through it, pausing after each sip to take slim bites of bread and butter. In this way he provided his own breakfast, along with his wife's, his children's, and his apprentices', coming to several people in all, sometimes as many as eight or nine, without paying more for all of the people combined than he formerly had paid for one or at two at the most.³⁵²

For those who excessively took up the coffee habit, a person had barely opened his eyes in the morning before coffee was brought to him in bed, for there was a conviction, confirmed by doctors, that to rise from bed on an empty stomach and, even worse, to go that way out into the open air, was unhealthy. For that reason, pious ladies, when they went to receive morning communion, hurried to it as early as they could and, after receiving it, rushed back home again even more hurriedly, ready to sock the servant girl in the mouth, or at least give her cheeks a healthy pinch, if she were not immediately met upon crossing the threshold with coffee already made. Village women, for their part, when they went to receive the sacrament, and if they lived far away from the parish church, took coffee along with them to break the fast, and either there, or in the priest's home, in the tavern, or in

³⁵² The figures may not obviously add up, but one gets the point.

some other place right after communion they would have a drink of their beloved beverage out of fear of bringing on some unhealthy indisposition caused by a too-long empty stomach. It's odd that they couldn't rid themselves of this prejudice by observing the experience of their own servants, who regularly carried an empty stomach all the way to the mid-day meal, or sometimes went the whole day hungry and ended up the healthier for it, and sprightlier than their masters and delicate mistresses.

Even should a lady with the coffee habit pay a visit to as many as ten households in a day (which is easy to do in the city), she would not turn down a cup of coffee whenever it was offered, and it was everywhere the custom for coffee to be on offer to the ladies.

And that was just as well, because before coffee became known, a distinguished member of the fairer sex would take for her morning meal a concoction made of beer, wine, sugar, egg, saffron, and cinnamon. As long as this met the needs of only those in the household, or those visiting for a day or two, but not those on a short visit, it did not cost very much. But when, after having downed this concoction, the ladies of the house together with their guests would begin sneaking out to the local drug store to rinse down that sickening sweet mixture with vodka, after only a little while they would become soused, and turn into wild women, hellions, and beasts, ending up as inveterate drunkards—which defect coffee does not have, and for that reason one must praise it and give thanks to the person who first brought it to our country, because it has kept not only the fairer sex, but also many men away from hard drink, which destroys both health and mind.

In the average noble homes the drinks that were, and probably still are, in fashion were: in Ruthenia: vodka, mead, cherry brandy, raspberry brandy; in Lithuania: vodka and mead, both ordinary and linden-flower; in Greater Poland and in Mazuria: vodka and beer, of which the following kinds were in particular favor: in Łowicz and environs, including Warsaw, Łowicz beer was for a long time popular; in Lublin and vicinity it was Wąchock beer; in Piotrków and vicinity it was Gielniów beer; in the Poznań and Kalisz region it was Grodzisk beer; and in Warmia, it was Eleborg beer, which was also appreciated in Warsaw under the name of black beer. Toward the end of the reign of August III, Czech beer appeared first in Warsaw and later in various parts of the country, both ordinary and double-strength, as well as "English" beer, which was first invented by Hieronim Wielopolski, equer-

ry to the Crown. It tasted a lot like real English beer, which was and still is imported from England. However, “English” beer never enjoyed much distribution, only in Warsaw at the palace of that same gentleman and in Obory, where it was made, about three miles from Warsaw. It soon lost favor, as Otwock beer outdid it. But Otwock beer soon had its mantle taken by Wilanów beer, and Wilanów beer had at last to yield to Livonian, which was not as strong nor foamed as much as genuine English beer.

Alewives in the major towns, looking for a profit, learned to pour young and unripe beer into bottles both large and small, so that when stoppered with clay and allowed to sit for a while it tasted better than straight from the cask; and in a small well-stoppered bottle after the stopper was removed it would foam just like real English beer. So when these various beers hit the market, Łowicz, Gielniów, and Wąchock beer soon lost favor and entered the ranks of ordinary beer, while in Greater Poland Grodzisk³⁵³ beer gained more and more renown, such that any nobleman from there who didn’t have Grodzisk beer in stock would be considered a boor or a skinflint. Its esteem was enhanced by doctors who attributed to it all the qualities of mineral water. It was a light and tasty beer and didn’t go to one’s head. Doctors allowed it for patients suffering from all kinds of maladies for which they forbade other alcoholic beverages, although, of course, for some illnesses they forbade it too.

In Kraków and Sandomierz, no beer other than English enjoyed any respect, although the common folk there, namely the peasantry, just like in Ruthenia and Lithuania, take vodka for the common beverage, while the nobility and wealthy townsfolk prefer Hungarian wine, for reason of the proximity of Hungary. Citizens of Kraków made fun of those from Greater Poland for serving beer in dainty glasses for tasting, although that was nothing but a joke. But to tell the truth, were it even so, good beer is better than bad wine, which is what they serve in certain Kraków and Sandomierz households: some thinnish half water, half wine made from the last leavings of the Hungarian presses.³⁵⁴

353 Today’s *piwo grodziskie*, unlike what Kitowicz describes, is a strong (12%) beer type brewed from malted grain composed mostly of oak-smoked wheat, still produced in Poland on a limited basis, and popular with home brewers.

354 One sees in this passage the long-standing cultural rivalry between Lesser and Greater Poland, with Kitowicz patriotically standing up for the latter.

So whatever drink was favored in whatever province, that was what was served, and it would have been bad company or a bad feast when no one drank, and when a guest bade goodbye to the host in a sober state. Any nobleman who maintained such sobriety in his home gained little respect and was considered bad company. People would call him a frog,³⁵⁵ a teetotaler, or a tightwad. Wherever beer was in fashion, they would drink it from breakfast to dinner, and from dinner to bed. Some were of such good throat and capacious stomach that a liter goblet or glass, or a mug without legs so that it couldn't be put down, a so-called cripple cup, could be quaffed in a single draft without stopping. They composed for such feats various ditties that the company would sing to accompany a person as he did so, or a band would play the melody, the point being that he had to drain the vessel to the last drop, because if he failed to do so, they would top it up and begin the ditty all over again until the person, unable to master the excessive measure, either begged pardon of the crowd or escaped out the door, giving those remaining a good occasion to laugh and poke fun at the weakling.

A keg of beer set up in the hearth, once a party of drinkers had been assembled, wouldn't last two hours, but would be drained to the yeast or, in extreme cases of debauchery, together with the yeast. Such merrymaking was more typical in Mazuria and in the Sieradz district, where there is a larger number of nobility of impoverished means, possessed of a single hamlet and a couple of villages, rather than an immense fortune of millions. So in a way it was out of thriftiness, since a farm boy or other servant didn't have to wear out his shoes as much when the barrel stood in the fireplace as when he had to run back and forth with a jug to a barrel standing in the cellar. Four, or even as few as two good tipplers could drain a fifty-quart keg between vespers and bedtime, going on toward or even past midnight. After a victory, they would drink vodka and go to sleep in good health, even if a little tipsy. Some gay young blades acquired the reputation among the populace as Knights of the Flagon and were capable of elevating their sponsor to the highest offices. Great lords cultivated such drunkards, who liked to take over local councils and the leadership of all kinds of local offices. For, when among the populace nothing could be ac-

355 In Polish, *francuz* (Frenchman), used derogatorily, as is almost every reference to the French in the *Description*.

complished without drunkenness, whether it was some kind of agreement, or upholding a matter of personal interest, without sprinkling it with some kind of drink according to the worth of the people involved, the situation forced the lords to keep by their side those with heads most resistant to drink who, when the occasion demanded, would be able to deputize with their throats whenever the lords, left thereby with better intellect on their side, were trying to twist besotted minds, having become more like senseless machines, to their purpose.

Along with ordinary drinking vessels like wine glasses, goblets, steins, and loving cups, in households that liked to indulge they had special vessels for beer, such as long glass canes with a broad bulb at the end, which could hold a quart of beer; steins with straws through which one had to drink; trumpet- and horn-shaped vessels; and glass half-gallon containers with three rings around them. The cane, stein, trumpet, and so on, were not harmful from the drinking point of view, since they did not hold that much, but were more of a nuisance in the manner in which one had to drink from them. When drinking from the cane or trumpet, it was necessary to contort one's body by tipping far backwards. If someone wanted to take the straw-stein from his mouth and did not know how to plug up the straw with his tongue to stop the flow of beer, he got splattered all over. However, with the three-ringed vessel, whoever undertook the first draft had to determine who was going to take over after the first ring was reached. If he didn't drink enough, or if he drank past his ring, more was immediately poured into the jug. In addition to the above-mentioned drinking implements, various stratagems were dreamt up to help one get drunk in spite of oneself. I will only mention one of them, from which the rest can easily be imagined.

A man would sit down at the table, and others would crowd around him in the role of judges and witnesses. He would take a stein in his hand, whatever kind he liked, large or small, filled with beer. His task was not to drink it down all at once, but in three stages. After the first draft he had to stroke each side of his mustache once, with one finger. After the second he was to stroke his beard with the same finger from his nose down to the bottom of his beard and back up again in the same line, and then, with the same finger, tap once on the top of the table, and once on the bottom, stamp his foot on the floor and utter the word "*piwo*" (beer).

After the second round, he had to do all of these motions over again in order, not leaving any out, but now twice; that is, he had to stroke himself twice on each side of his mustache, down and up his beard twice, knock on the table-top twice and twice on the bottom, and say the word “*dobrze*” (good).³⁵⁶ The last time, after which the remainder of the beer should have been drained from the container, all of the above gestures were to be tripled, upon which the vessel was to be handed over with the word “*nalej!*” (pour some more!). At any gesture, number, or word where the drinker committed a mistake, the jug would be filled up again. And although these gestures might seem to be trifling, those standing around would think up various ways to confuse his memory, and mistakes were common, and once someone had made a mistake, it was hard for him to avoid making further ones, especially since for every mistake he had to start all over again. And so, making more and more mistakes, he got drunk and never finished the trick, making sport of himself before the gathered company.

Good times, constant peace, and an abundance of everything. Everyone’s minds were absorbed with entertainment and enjoyment, especially as the Sejms, interrupted time and time again, did not entice anyone to employ himself for the common good.



³⁵⁶ That is, “good beer.” The neuter form of the adjective agrees with the neuter gender of *piwo* (beer).



ON THE MORE FAMOUS DRUNKARDS

In this chapter, Kitowicz lets his story-telling urge get the better of his mission to catalogue customs, and instead describes the famous drunkards he has known or heard about and chooses to immortalize, ranging from the affable Prince Sanguszko, the bully Crown Carver Małachowski, the truly insane Castellan Boreyko, and the notorious sadist Prince Karol Radziwiłł. Of these, Kitowicz had personal contact at least with Małachowski, affording him the rare opportunity to comment on a personality first-hand. Kitowicz must have had hundreds more of such anecdotes in store, and it is unfortunate that his writings did not preserve more of them.

O.E.S.

Out of all the drunkards, among whose number one might include to varying degrees of perfection every Polish gentleman and nobleman, there were three in the Crown Kingdom and one in Lithuania who excelled at this art, all of whom I consider it proper to preserve in memory for posterity. Foremost among them was Prince Janusz Sanguszko, ordinate of Ostróg,³⁵⁷ marshal of the Lithuanian court. His capacity for drink, described earlier, I will not repeat here but merely add that there was nothing crude about it; merriment alone ruled his debauches. He himself drank heartily without becoming inebriated, for which reason he paid little heed to others. Gatherings at his house were huge and always caused him distraction, and he had such a prodigious head for drink that, when he had drunk so much that he began to stagger, he would order his carriage to be harnessed and, after riding around in it for several

³⁵⁷ Ostróg is a town in Volynia in contemporary Ukraine. Concerning *ordynat*, see note 82. Janusz Sanguszko so dissipated his family's hereditary fortune in riotous living that his ordinacy was finally taken away from him by an official act of the Sejm in 1766.

miles, he would return as sober as if he had never drunk a drop, and take up drinking again with those keeping him company.

A second, Boreyko, Castellan of Zawichost,³⁵⁸ could be labeled a pious drunk, because it gave him the greatest pleasure to drink with priests when he had no business to do with laypeople. Whenever he was not otherwise engaged he would send letters to neighboring cloisters near his residence requesting that they send him two brothers, having thought up some sort of religious excuse for doing so. The superiors of the cloisters, knowing full well what the purpose of this mission was, would send him those best suited for drinking. Boreyko would then lock them up together with himself in his private rooms and inform his household that this was a cloister to which no one was to be admitted after it was closed: no guests, household staff, wife, nor any woman, whatever their mission might be.

Before locking his "cloister," he would have it supplied with whatever was needed for comfort and for eating and drinking, primarily wine. The bedroom would be strewn with straw and spread with carpets. No other bedding would be needed for this drinking brotherhood, for everyone would sleep where they fell. Servants designated as assistants were locked up together with the gentlemen. There was a bell next to one of the doors, similar to one at a cloister gate or corridor. The bell would be used to call the people to mass, to table, and to silence, which would ensue only after all of them, being drunk, would be spread passed out on the straw. So as not to neglect doing honor to the Lord God, they would designate in advance one from among them as the priest who was to conduct Holy Mass the following day. That person was not allowed to drink past eleven o'clock, even should he want to do so. Even more precisely was set the time for the hour of abstinence before mass as prescribed by the canons, in the event of any sort of imprecision on the part of their timepieces.

When all had arisen the next day, they went for Mass to a chapel adjacent to this cloister. After listening to the mass, their custom was to have a cup of tea followed by a glass of vodka and then another, after which breakfast followed. After breakfast there would be wine, and after wine, drunk moderately, there would be dinner, and after dinner there would be

³⁵⁸ Kitowicz is referring to Piotr Boreyko, castellan from 1749 to 1755 in Zawichost, a small town near Sandomierz.

a continuous drink-fest until supper, and after supper more of the same. The whole time, however, the regulation prayers had to be said at the proper time, and Castellan Boreyko would say them along with the priests. This cloister would last for three days at least, or five at the most, depending on the drinkers' strength of devotion. After dissolving his cloister, he would send the monks back to their own cloisters, well gifted and supplied with alms.

When his cloister was not being held, and he had no one with whom to drink, he would walk to a nearby crossroads on which an attractive chapel to St. John Nepomucen had been built with a roof and picket fence, supplied all around with benches. To this hermitage his liveried servants would bring one case of wine and then another, along with several large goblets. There he would take a seat with rosary beads in hand until some traveler chanced to arrive by carriage or on foot: a priest, monk, mendicant, nobleman, burgher, farmer, Jew, tramp—anyone so long as it was a human. Walking out toward them from the chapel, he would stop them with a greeting and inquire where they were from, where they might be headed, and what their errand might be, while his boy, knowing his master's custom, would in the meantime have poured out a goblet of wine with which, taking it up, Boreyko would drink to the traveler's health, importuning him to do the same to him in return. And that would go on for as long as it took for that traveler to fall flat on his face, or until his throat could not accommodate any more. If he should collapse and fall asleep, Boreyko would head for home but send back a guard to protect the person against a robber or other miscreant, lest he be frisked and robbed. And if several travelers gathered in this way, he would drink with all of them until he had gotten every last one of them drunk. A person travelling with a numerous retinue would be requested to pay a brief visit to his manse, but whoever allowed himself to be so persuaded was lucky to get away. If he managed to resist, then he and his entire retinue at least had to share a goblet all around, or sometimes until the wine-case was drunk dry. Boreyko was considerate, and did not require that a person knock back a whole goblet at a single gulp, but allowed a person to rest now and then, but not for long. He was a man so tall and muscular, that it became proverbial around the Krakow voivodeship that anyone wanting to curse another and to do so effectively, would say "May you have as much of the Devil in you as Sir Boreyko."

The third drunk, Crown Carver Adam Małachowski,³⁵⁹ could be called an assassin of human health, since so many people inundated by him with wine died, some of them in his very house, having fallen asleep once and for all in a deadly slumber. It's a strange thing that such occurrences, when brought to his attention, did not alter in the least his insane habit of getting people drunk by plying them with wine by force. He had at his place in Bąkowa Góra³⁶⁰ an immense half-gallon goblet, on which were engraved three hearts with the motto: "*corda fidelium*" (hearts of the faithful). Sometimes he used this goblet at banquets and assemblies, but ordinarily he used it for greeting anyone who visited him in Bąkowa Góra for the first time. If such a guest came at morning time, he was served breakfast as soon as possible, so that he might have something in his stomach before drinking, for there was no way to avoid the goblet. As soon as it had been placed in the hands of the guest, he was admonished that he had to drink it down all at once, for if anything were left undrunk, it would be topped off again, until he had drunk the whole thing down. This forced drinking did more harm than the excess of wine by itself. Among great lords who were less inclined to drunkenness, there were few who dared to visit the crown carver, but if anyone were compelled to go to him on some urgent business, he first drew up a document along the lines of a *salvum conductum* (safe conduct pass), stipulating that he was not to be forced into any kind of drinking—specifically, not to the *corda fidelium* goblet.

For the most part Małachowski was visited by tipplers of the crown: captains, colonels, and other such company as had no fear of a keg, not to mention a goblet, and who had throats so skilled at swallowing that they could down as much as they could take in. However, if a gentleman ever sent a servant with a letter to the crown carver, inevitably he would have to send a second one to find out what had happened to the first; and sometimes a third would have to be sent when the first and the second, having fallen into the hands of the carver, would later be found either resting or simply expired, lying passed out somewhere, by the stairs or next to the fence, dead to the world, not to mention to the response to the letter. I am not exaggerating in this description in the least, for I myself barely avoid-

359 For more on Małachowski, see the Chapter "The Crown Tribunals."

360 Bąkowa Góra is a small village in south-central Poland in Łódź voivodeship.

ed a similar misfortune, escaping without my sword, cap, or horse—all left as a pledge of my certain return, under the pretext of an urgent need which I need not mention here.

This gentleman, who believed that there was no one stronger than himself at drinking, whom his *corda fidelium* could not overcome or, more properly described, utterly oppress, nevertheless did happen upon one such person who put this conviction to shame. This was a mendicant priest, a Bernardine from the cloister in Wielka Wola known as Lord Jesus Commons, which lies in Opoczyn county. This priest, feeling sufficiently in control of himself, having been sent out on an alms-gathering mission, boldly rode up to the carver of Bąkowa Góra, a place that all other mendicants avoided like the plague. This happened in the morning, before the mid-day meal. The crown carver was glad to see that a guest, not seen for a long time, had fallen into his hands. At the brother's humble request for alms, he agreed, but on one condition: "If you drink this goblet (indicating the *corda fidelium*) at a single draught, I will have your cart filled full of grain. But if you fail to finish it at once, my men will top it up again for as many times as you stop and leave so much as a single drop in it." The brother meekly replied that he would prefer to be fortified with food rather than with drink, for he was hungry. The crown carver forthwith commanded that he be fed. He was brought a bowl of hunter's stew and a joint of roast. Having eaten a certain quantity of both one and the other, he asked for a glass of beer and, having drunk that, he began to take his leave, as if no longer wanting to ask for alms for fear of the goblet. The carver, taking delight at his fright, said "No, brother: no one is allowed to leave this house once he has entered it without first drinking from this goblet."

At this announcement the Bernardine, professing great consternation, under threat of force took the goblet in both hands, poured it up to the very top and, making the sign of the cross over it several times and pounding himself on the chest as a gesture that he was acting against his will—and casting a final sigh toward heaven—began to gulp, but suddenly, as if running out of steam, he took it away from his lips, leaving in the goblet a half quart of wine. "Aha, you didn't finish it, brother," the carver began to shout, "Fill it up again, fill it up!" At their master's command his haiduks leapt up to the Bernardine with their flagons while he, draining the rest from the goblet, began to sidle across the room, pointing to the emp-

ty goblet. "No you don't, brother," the crown carver again cried out, "You didn't finish it all at once! Catch him and fill it up again!" They grabbed hold of the Bernardine and poured it up to the top as the first time, holding him by his belt so he could not escape. The Bernardine, cornered like a bear in the forest, sighed several times and began to down the second goblet, this time with slower gulps, but again he did not finish it. The carver once again shouted, "You didn't finish it! Fill it up again!" The Bernardine fell to his knees and begged for all he was worth but, when that didn't help, he placed the third goblet to his lips and drank the same quantity as the first two times, both times leaving enough that the cause for applying force would still be in effect. Again the carver commanded them to fill it up. And in that way, with all his fake grimaces, the Bernardine quaffed six immense goblets of wine, one after the other.

The carver, who had at first derived great merriment from making sport of the Bernardine, seeing that he was still on his feet and the color of his complexion was unchanged, recognized that it was he who had been made the butt of the joke. He flew into a rage and ordered him to be shoved out the door. "Why, that crafty fellow! He would have drained my entire cellar!" Recovering from his initial anger, he sent people after him to see how he was faring. They reported that he had mounted his cart just fine, without the slightest problem, and had set off down the road. The carver ordered them to chase him down and stop him. He sent him a consignment of several bushels of grain, but did not want to see him again face to face, and he ordered that he never be allowed to set foot there again.

The fourth drunkard, by nature not differing much from a madman, and when drunk truly mad, was Prince Karol Radziwiłł, voivode³⁶¹ of Wilno. Whereas Małachowski, as described above, killed people with wine, Radziwiłł killed with arms. It was nothing for him to shoot a person in the head like a dog, but such incidents can be considered ordinary in the house and family of the Radziwiłłs. His uncles and his brothers were

361 The office of voivode is more or less equivalent to that of provincial governor. Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł (1734–1790), known by the nickname *Panie kochanku* (My dear lord), occupied many high offices in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. A notorious symbol of the age, loved by some and reviled by others, said to have been wild and untamable from birth, Radziwiłł was the wealthiest magnate in Poland in the second half of the 18th century, and one of the richest men in Europe. His properties included 16 cities, 683 villages, and 25 counties.

the same, just not his father, the Great Lithuanian Hetman who, whether sober or drunk, was of a very restrained disposition. Murders committed while drunk were not his style and did not characterize him, but Karol was characterized by the most despicable actions committed while drunk in public among numerous company. He would rub his private parts and give the signal to fire off a salute to the burial of Radziwiłł as having been born and having died (I cannot explain this more clearly out of considerations of delicacy). Besides such dissipation, another sport of his while drunk was to play painful jokes on one or another of his confidants: he would whack a person on the backsides with a stick from out of hiding; poke a goblet into someone's mouth until he choked on it; pour wine down the collar of a person not drinking enough; knock two heads together of people engrossed in talk, causing bruises to erupt on their foreheads; and play various scandalous tricks to embarrass the ladies. Such were the delightful sports of Radziwiłł, so that it was difficult for anyone to leave his company without suffering one or another such side benefit. However, because he was as generous with his gifts as he was abundant in his mischief, no one ever complained about it. He would bestow horses and regalia, rich sash belts, broadswords, pistols, watches, snuff boxes, and various other expensive trinkets on those who were able to receive his painful jokes shriekingly and not angrily. He would even lease to them entire villages for life and grant clutches of estates at low rent to his faithful companions in his debauches and dissolutions.

His greatest and cruelest joke was played on Pac, the Great Lithuanian Scribe, his favorite and boon companion in all his dissipations. Radziwiłł once so annoyed Pac with his crude practical jokes that, unable to take them any longer, Pac threatened him with a duel. Radziwiłł, not wanting to break off the friendship, but nevertheless wanting to give Pac a good scare for making the threat, pretended to be extremely angry at him for it. He ordered him to be seized, placed in irons, and thrown into prison. Next day he had him dressed in an execution gown and led to the square in the company of the master executioner and a priest to administer the last sacraments. All of Pac's and Radziwiłł's friends froze at the sight and threw themselves at his feet, pleading for Pac's life. Pac himself, with tears and lamentations begged for mercy. But Radziwiłł, pretending to be resolute and unbending, turned a deaf ear to all entreaties and urged

Pac to kneel before the sword which the master executioner held over his head. Finally Pac pleaded for just one moment more so that he could adjust his confession, but Radziwiłł, having had enough of his joke, broke out in a kindly smile. "You see, Pac! I frightened you more than you did me with your threat of a duel!" Then he led Pac back to his rooms, still in his execution gown, just as he had been on the square, and he offered him enormous presents in exchange for the joke, followed by a gala feast and drinking bout to commemorate the exploit. Naturally, Pac, first faced with death only to be overcome with sudden joy, and then forced in addition to take part in a drunken feast, fell ill and died three days later.

My reader may be surprised at how such criminal excesses were allowed to go unpunished. However, I will relieve him of his surprise by recalling Polish law, which allowed a nobleman guilty of premeditated murder to redeem the head of a nobleman he had slain with money. Not to mention murders committed in a state of intoxication, or jokes having harmful consequences but not necessarily causing death. The family would be bought off and pacified, and that would be the end of it. However, if a commoner were to lose his life at the hands or caprice of a lord, vain would be an appeal to the law, which set the price of a peasant's life at a hundred zlotys a head. And anyone who was not a nobleman was considered to be a peasant, although he might be a prosperous townsman or the wealthiest commoner.





OF CARRIAGES AND CONVEYANCES

One would practically be able to construct for oneself an early eighteenth-century carriage based on the following description of them. This passage was obviously written on the basis of copious notes made from personal observation taken over the course of many years and over many generations of horse-drawn conveyances. From the short listing of the kinds of horse-drawn vehicles in use in his day, leaving out such fundamental types as stage coaches, funeral wagons, and hunting carts, to name only a few, Kitowicz shows that he is mainly interested in zeroing in on town carriages used by the rich and famous. To be sure, there are at least a hundred different terms for referring to different types of horse-drawn vehicles used in eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe, and the same term often covers a wide range of actual examples. Kitowicz is surely being over-generous in his defense of the six-horse carriage for being more suitable for passing over rough and muddy roads. Six horses for a town coach is sheer ostentation by any measure.

This chapter, along with another short one attached to it on horses and harnesses, could be cited as an example of how occasionally Kitowicz forgets that his reader's attention span on detail may not fully match his own, but the reader can still become infected despite himself with the writer's habit of investigating every small detail of a subject down to its last brass tack. Poland boasts a number of important carriage collections, one being located at the castle in Łańcut and another in Galowice, south of Wrocław.

O.E.S.

Carriages and other conveyances were yet another fashionable outlet for indulging in luxury. As soon as I came into the world and gained consciousness I encountered a dual nomenclature for parade carriages: people would either say or write that “he rode in a carriage”

or “he rode in a coach.” These two words meant one and the same thing, namely, a completely covered vehicle, while the word “conveyance” embraced semi-open vehicles, completely open ones, phaetons (later called carriages),³⁶² alongside transport wagons, caravans, gigs, and small open buggies mostly used by women, priests, parsons, and the poorest and most elderly gentry. When a lady rode in such a buggy during the rain, and she covered her head with the tail of her skirt, people mockingly said of her, “She’s riding in a semi-open carriage.”

So as not to leave anything out, in the early years of August III, one could still encounter, albeit rarely, the so-called poor-boy, essentially a box on two wheels drawn by a single horse harnessed between two shafts. Another name for the poor-boy was a half-cart. It was thus named for reason of the two missing wheels and the fact that the person riding in it was both passenger and driver. Even if space had permitted, the weight of two people would have been more than enough for a single horse. Because of its rarity, since it was going out of fashion, and whenever raucous boys, especially school-boys, encountered one in town, they did not fail to chase after it in a crowd of a dozen or more, shouting “A poor-boy’s coming, a poor-boy!” for as long as it remained in sight. No one traveling by day either to or from town in a poor-boy ever escaped such a welcoming or farewell.³⁶³

For a long time, no carriages could be found in the country other than those made in either Gdańsk or Leszno. To be sure, saddlers and cartwrights could be found in other towns, but they were not fortunate enough to make new carriages, but simply repaired old ones, for they did not have the requisite materials or maybe even the know-how, or possibly because closed carriages were used only by the very wealthy who never exchanged them until the old ones were completely falling apart. For such reason first-rate and well-off craftsmen were not attracted to our country, for there was insufficient demand for their craft.

³⁶² *phaeton*: a sporty high-wheeled open carriage. *caravan*, in Polish, *karaban*: a largish, usually covered carriage used for conveying people or goods. *gig*: in Polish, *rydwan* (which also means “chariot”) is probably used by Kitowicz here in the sense of a light two-wheeled, one-horse carriage.

³⁶³ The so-called *bieda* or *biedka*, whose name, despite Kitowicz’s etymology, actually comes via folk etymology from Latin *biga* (not directly from Polish *bieda* [poverty]), eventually became transformed into a rugged carrier often drawn by two horses, and was used under that name especially by the Polish army for hauling light artillery and ammunition up through World War II.

After carriages became more numerous, to the extent that practically every gentleman with as little as a single village to his name kept either a completely covered or a semi-covered carriage if not for himself then for his wife and daughters, carriage-makers and cartwrights multiplied about the towns. Stanisław Poniatowski, Voivode of Mazovia, was first to settle Zaleszczyki, a town in Ukraine, with carriage-makers and other craftsmen, and soon afterwards Great Crown Chancellor Jan Małachowski did the same for his town of Końskie in the Sandomierz district, where he also established up-to-date foundries and a gunsmith.

From that time on, new carriages began to be manufactured in the principle towns, especially in Warsaw. However, because a taste for foreign things predominated, even the best of carriages made domestically immediately lost their value as soon as it was discovered that they were a local product, so no carriage-maker placed his name on a carriage, much less the town of origin, but would stamp on it Paris, London, Berlin, or Vienna, for it was to these towns that gentlemen flocked for their carriages. Gdańsk was now neglected, to the extent that Gdańsk craftsmen bringing carriages for sale by river-boat gave them English or French names, as if they had been imported from those countries by sea when, in fact, they were a product of Gdańsk. But when the taste for luxury spread throughout the country, and carriage styles changed every three years or so, people no longer cared about whether their carriage was native to Paris or Warsaw, but only about whether it was the latest fashion, on the principle that whatever was latest was best. When a thrifty person continued to use a carriage that was still strong and comfortable, even if it had gone out of style, he was sneered at by fashionable spendthrifts, who said he was riding in Noah's ark.

Royal parade carriages and those of great lords were variously carved on the outside, painted with Chinese lacquer, richly adorned with figures of gold-plated brass, and on the inside with satin stitched richly with gold piping and mirrored windows; some were completely covered—front, back, and sides—with mirrored tiles set into costly frames. Such carriages may be seen at public gatherings even now, except for the shape, which changes with the times.

Carriages designed for more general use were upholstered inside in poppy-red or carmine fabric stitched with yellow or white piping, and the

outside would be stretched with dark cowhide. The wooden shafts would be gilded. The cowhide would sometimes be decorated with bronze or brass figures, but more often it would be tacked down with large gold-plated brass studs. The carriage-box would be of such a height that a person could comfortably stand inside it. The box was slung on thick leather straps between two shafts connecting the front and rear axles. The carriage-box rode no higher than three-quarters of a cubit above the ground. The rear wheels were large and the front ones tiny for better steering, but as a result the driver had to avoid the slightest stump or rock so that the front axle or the carriage-box not run aground. The rear servant's seat, set upon the axle and made of smooth boards painted the same color as the wheels and shafts, was protected from mud on both sides by two large leather fenders stretched over iron frames; a wooden step was attached to it, painted the same as the seat and hinged on straps, which lackeys used to ascend to their seat, and on which haiduks or, lacking those, paiuks would take their place at the rear of the carriage. The front driver's seat was so low that the driver's head barely peered out over the horses. The seat also served the driver as his personal box in which he kept a horse-comb, whiskbroom, brush, and whatever else might be needed for the horses, and often, as a prevention against hunger, a hunk of bread and cheese, which he would eat when forced to stand in a parade for several hours, as described elsewhere.³⁶⁴

Whichever way the inside of the coach was upholstered, the driver's seat was draped with the same material and piped in the same way, and it was called his saddle-blanket. Behind the driver's seat was a plank attached to the shafts and painted in the same color, on which a page or, according to the taste of the owner, a boy brought up as a liveried Turk, Hungarian, or Moorish servant stood; he would hold on to the shoulders of the driver. The doors of the carriage closed on iron bolts with brass handles fixed to the inside; either that or there was a wheeled mechanism which, when turned, raised the bolt up or down for the person opening or closing the carriage. It was important that the doors be as tightly fitted as possible so that water or filth not enter a low-slung carriage as it forded a stream or traveled across a deep puddle. When doors were loose-fitting, water or mud always found their way into the carriage, getting the

³⁶⁴ See the chapter "Public Convocations."

feet of those sitting inside just as wet as if they had been pedestrians, unless they were able to put their feet up on the seats, which they were not always able to do for reason of the cramped quarters caused by the number of people inside.

Such instances occurred even during major parades, particularly in Warsaw along the muddy and pot-holed streets which, for a long time, excepting *Krakowskie Przedmieście* and the Old Town, were not paved and everywhere were full of pits and puddles, about which I will have more to say under the heading "Public Convocations." The steps of the carriages hung down even lower than the carriage-box. They were of leather stretched over wood and they were supported by two iron spikes fixed to the shafts in such a way that they could deflect slightly upwards in case they knocked against something solid. Otherwise they hung loosely like a clock's pendulum, and when the carriage suddenly came up against a pile of mud, the steps would run through it like a plough through earth.

Toward the end of August III's reign, foreign artistry finally came to the aid of such inconvenience by introducing something less unpleasant. Craftsmen from abroad invented carriages slung on springs, with the carriage-box planted up high on supple iron slats just over the shafts, of which sometimes there was just one beneath the carriage and sometimes two. Sometimes at the front axle these slats were fashioned in the shape of swan's heads (although they were called ganders), in such a way that the front wheels, by now according to the day's fashion only slightly smaller than the rear wheels, could fit beneath the ganders. Now that the carriage-box stood five or six quarters of a cubit above the ground, the craftsmen added height to the box from below, taking it away from the top, so that now the box was so low that a person sitting inside could not stand up, and a person getting into it had to bend over, sit down, and then straighten up, for the ceiling of the box was right over his head. Collapsible steps arrived, consisting of two risers on which, when lowered, people entered and exited the carriage. When folded up, they did not hang out gathering mud like their predecessors, but remained inside the carriage behind the door where they had a place leaning against the side in the shape of a tablet.

The driver's seat for such carriages was so tall that half of the driver's body sat above the carriage-box, and he mounted such a seat practically on a ladder: first by stepping on the axle end, then on the seat's support-

ing bar, then on a step, and finally onto the seat, next to which there were two stout leather loops fastened to the floor into which the driver slipped his feet, so that he might hold on the more securely. The driver's seat consisted of a mattress supported by leather straps covered with a blanket, at the sides of which were two leather pouches for storing the driver's effects. Should he ever fall off such a perch, whether because of a rough road or a head beclouded with too much drink, two prospects awaited him without fail: a long stay in bed and visitation by nightmares; or, if he escaped the latter, he never avoided the former.

These fashionable carriages also differed from the old ones in that they were not covered in cowhide as formerly but with papier-mâché, lacquered in some uniform color; for example, the entire box would be colored white, gray, green, yellow, and so on, generally according to the color of the house's livery, on which various figures or coats of arms were painted. However, black was the most frequently used color, and some were even painted in stripes. At just this time there arrived carriages called in French *vis à vis*, and the name was adopted in Poland. These were carriages so narrow that two persons could not fit next to one another, but one had to sit in the rear seat and the other in the front one facing backwards. And since many people in such carriages got seasick from sitting with their backs to the horses, junior people often had to yield their place to more senior ones, or a younger person would be placed in front for reason of the effect it had on an older person's health, and soon these carriages were abandoned. In their place they dreamed up so-called *solitaires*, or carriages for a single person who, therefore, was lord of his conveyance, for there was no place for anyone else to sit. But these were soon abandoned as being too dreary and depressing, especially on long journeys. And so they ended up with carriages for either two persons sitting next to one another, or for four persons, with two sitting in the back and two in front.

Toward the end of August III's reign, besides personal carriages used by the great lords, the wealthy nobility, and certain richer burghers, there appeared carriages for hire, although I am not certain whether they appeared in any other places than Warsaw. They were located at various saddlery shops, where they kept a couple of horses and liveried drivers, and in winter they hired out carriages from seven in the morning until noon, and from two o'clock in the afternoon until nine o'clock at night; in summer

they stayed open until ten. For a fancier carriage they took a red złoty, and for a less fancy one they charged twelve regular złotys. Whoever needed a carriage for longer than the prescribed time either had to abscond with the driver or pin him down in a spot from where he could not easily slip away. Otherwise, if his palm were not sufficiently greased, and he had the space to do it in, he would escape with his carriage the moment he heard his hour strike; and that was considered part of the bargain.

Great lords never made use of hired carriages; they were even embarrassed to be seen in the same carriage two days in a row, but would constantly alternate them; and they always took along six horses. Lesser lords, wealthy nobility, representatives to the Sejm—they were the ones who routinely hired carriages when their own carriage was out of commission, for they would have brought only one carriage to Warsaw. Or, in another situation, if a person did not have a competent driver familiar with all the streets and places, he would prefer to hire a carriage rather than knock axle-ends against other people's carriages with an unskilled driver in the thick of traffic, having to stop every few paces or so in order to ask directions for the street and apartment of the person he was visiting.

The fashion for six-horse teams lasted into the last years of August's reign. Ministers, senators, wealthier clerks of the Crown, young bachelors of great fortune, representatives to the Sejm, foreign emissaries, and court councilors would not dream of parading about Warsaw except with six horses and a cavalcade in front, it being considered some sort of disgrace to be likened to a burgher and be drawn by only a couple of horses. Rather than be seen in a two-horse carriage, people preferred to go about Warsaw on foot or on horseback.

However, in the last six years of August III's reign, gentlemen came to lose the taste for fancy equipages and cavalcades. They would use six-horse teams only for paying a first visit; afterwards they would limit themselves to two horses, no cavalcade, and a single lackey and haiduk, or even just two lackeys; and provincial functionaries and petty nobility followed their example. The use of two-horse carriages, since they were easier to manipulate than six, became the norm; almost no citizen allowed himself to be seen on foot, but only in a carriage or some kind of runabout,³⁶⁵ with a

365 In Polish, *kolaska*: a light horse-drawn open or semi-open vehicle.

servant riding in back to open and shut the door upon a person's mounting or dismounting. On gala days at court the foremost lords arrived at the royal palace in six-horse carriages accompanied by a single courtier on duty for the day. Still, hetmans of the Crown or Lithuania, marshals of the Sejm, and Crown chancellors continued to follow the six-horse fashion at all times, whether the day was gala or not. Great ladies as well, especially prominent *grande dames*, always had themselves hauled about by six horses. The use of six horses for one's carriage was not only a matter of showing off but also helped to traverse muddy spots more easily. When almost all the streets of Warsaw were finally cleaned up and paved, the reason for using six horses decreased, lessening accordingly the need for putting on a show. It only made sense to put on a show in daytime; at night it was not necessary, although even at night, mud could dictate the use of six horses, which in any case became unnecessary after the streets were paved.

Horses and Harnesses

Gentlemen were equally competitive with one another as to carriage horses and harnesses. A team of horses, in order to be fitting for a parade, had to consist of six beautiful full-size horses of identical coat and carriage, in other words, of identical composition. They were particularly selected for having heads of equal proportion, so that their necks broke evenly, without one held higher and another lower, and so that their legs were smooth and shapely. Such a team was in the highest demand, and for it they chose noble steeds of Turkish, English, Italian, Ukrainian, and Polish stock; such varieties were in use in the first years of August III's reign. Later on, they put aside Polish, Turkish, and Ukrainian horses, for the reason that the figure they cut next to the excessively tall carriages seemed too small for a grand parade, which emphasized everything showy and ostentatious. So people turned to German, Danish, Meklenburg, Prussian, and Saxon nags, and to an extent also Spanish ones. And since those horses had thick and shaggy legs, they shaved them down with glass so that the legs appeared smooth and slender. If all six horses were chosen such that they did not differ as to coat or beauty, people pronounced them well-matched as to shape and coat; if there was the slightest difference in carriage from one horse to another, but the coat was uniform, people said "Good coat, but a

bad carriage”; and if the carriage was uniform but the coat differed, people said “Good carriage, but a bad coat.” A good coat meant that all six horses seemed to have one and the same coat, one neither lighter nor darker than another, which was extremely difficult to achieve in the case of Polish and Turkish horses, so that a slight degree of difference as to coat color was tolerated: for example, when among gray horses one was grayer than the next, or among black ones one was blacker than the rest just as, for example, when one Moor is darker than another. Instead they concentrated on having the coat for all horses lie as smoothly as possible, and if that came out all right, then the team was considered good and fit for a parade.

Harnesses in use were of three types. Black ones without brass fittings were for work and everyday use: for caravans, six-horse open carriages, lighter open carriages, and kitchen wagons at greater estates; and also for nobles setting out on two- or four-horse journeys. The second kind of harnesses were black but with brass fittings, and were used by the nobility for four-horse travel, whether for longer journeys or just riding about town. The third kind of harnesses were for parades. They were also black but were studded profusely with brass fittings, first smeared with a polishing tincture made of strong vodka, suet, Gdańsk chimney-black, and wax, and then polished with a brush to a finish. Add to that camels-hair or silk reins and matching tassels attached to the horses’ heads—three per head—with more of the same woven into the horses’ manes, and three rosettes fashioned out of the same material as the reins, pinned around the ears, the mane, and the withers, and a fourth over the tail. At other times, the leather harness would be lined with velvet of sky-blue, green, poppy-red, carmine, or yellow—matched to the color of the estate’s livery—or with silk ribbons embroidered with gold or silver thread, adding to it pieces of silver or gold- or silver-plated brass, along with silk or camelhair reins embroidered with silver and gold, and with more of the same tassels, rosettes, and braided ribbons. Harnesses like this were used only for major parades, as they were too costly, and too subject to breakage from skittish horses. Whatever the reins looked like, the driver’s whip and the fore-rider’s lash had to be of the same material.





PUBLIC CONVOCATIONS

This passage, ostensibly concerned with public convocations, actually deals mostly with carriages as used in formal processions; while carrying passengers to public convocations; when disembarking passengers to them; while parked waiting for gatherings to be over; and when picking up passengers afterwards, the latter procedure degenerating into a general rout and free-for-all.

Structurally divided in half, Kitowicz's account sets up a symmetrical, high versus low, thematic contrast in his depiction of carriage customs. In the first half they allow for broad panoramic displays of pomp and ostentatious ceremony put on by the royalty and greater nobility. In the second half they become the setting for a series of memorable vignettes showing the carriage staff engaging in violence, vulgarity, and class resentment, as they lash out at each other, pitilessly mock their noble masters in absentia, and mercilessly harass those members of the "fairer sex" unfortunate enough to come across their path.

Kitowicz's POV (point of view in a cinematic sense) is as noteworthy here as in his earlier description of masked balls.

Not portraying himself as an actual participant in events, he nevertheless puts the reader in that position, as his cinematic eye roams freely, placing his "viewer" one moment in the thick of things, then pulling back the next moment to take in a broader view.

Foremost among public convocations were the Sejms, followed by the *senatus consilium*, tribunals, the Radom commissions, the Lwów trade fairs,³⁶⁶ the arrivals of lords into their landed possessions or royal town holdings,³⁶⁷ the processions of foreign diplomats on their way to an audience with the king and, finally, weddings and funerals held among the greater nobility.

On the first day the Sejm convened, the king would ride from his palace to the royal castle. Lords and elected representatives to the Sejm, who would have gathered at the castle in advance at an hour designated by the Great Crown Marshal, would send their liveried carriages to accompany the king along his route. On that day the Kraków Road along the entire way from the royal palace to the castle would be cleared of all trash, litter, and refuse and, if the weather had been dry, the roadbed would be watered down and swept. No one was allowed to cross the street on that day until the king had passed. Members of the king's Saxon guard or the royal carriage guard, dressed in parade uniform, lined both sides of the street, ten paces apart.

Carriages would pass one after another in order, according to the rank of their owners, preceded on foot by their liveried servants, with lackeys walking in front of the horses, followed by haiduks in long, split-sleeve overcoats wearing tall peacock-plumed Hungarian hats and, alongside the haiduks (if such were available), paiuks dressed Turkish style in the finest of material. A pair of pages on horseback would be situated among the haiduks next to the carriage. The least elaborate equipage consisted of four lackeys and two haiduks; the most elaborate could number as many as twelve lackeys and six haiduks, along with either two or four paiuks. That number was not exceeded even by the king's own livery. In fact it was exceeded only by Kajetan Sołtyk, bishop of Kraków who, during the first year of his bishopric, decked out his carriage with twenty-four lackeys, twelve haiduks, and four pages. However, already in his second year he reduced his sumptuous staff, which outdid all others as to size and pomp, to a normal size.

³⁶⁶ *kontrakty lwowskie*: yearly gatherings of the nobility with the aim of conducting real estate, business, and trade agreements.

³⁶⁷ *starostwo grodowe*: a royally held town or county placed under the administration and judicial authority of a nobleman, usually for life.

The carriages of the Polish lords were followed by those of foreign emissaries and of the papal nuncio and, after them, by the carriage of the Great Crown Marshal. After him came the royal cavalcade, which consisted of a dozen or more top-ranking Crown and Lithuanian officials, regimental commanders and colonels, with various other notables scattered among them, riding noble steeds decked out in rich saddlery, accompanied by a single royal guardsman, assigned to such duty for the day. At the end of the royal cavalcade rode the Crown equerry, always a Saxon, behind whom followed, in the same arrangement as described above, the king's own royal livery and carriage drawn by six enormous Spanish stallions, typically yellow-brown in color. The royal carriage, glittering from all sides with gold and crystal panels, allowed the entire person of the king to be seen from all sides as he rode by himself in his carriage, enhancing the showy golden display with his enormous and wonderfully magnificent personage. Behind his carriage came a parade of thirty-six royal guards in richly embroidered kaftans, with a single officer in front and a second one riding in reserve. At the sight of such an entourage the streets and every window of every building would be filled with gaping on-lookers.

Even though, for as long as the Sejm lasted, or when the *senatus concilium* was in session, the king rode every day from his palace to the castle, he was accompanied by the parade of nobles only on the first day. After that, the Kraków Road was no longer lined with soldiers, and traffic along it proceeded normally, except that during the specific time of the king's ride the Great Crown Marshal's guard stood watch to make sure that nobody stepped onto the roadway. As for the residents of the street, they stood watch by their windows every day, thereby giving sign of their attachment to the monarchy, for they simply could not get enough of this pleasing sight.

Whatever order and showiness the reader may observe in the royal entourage, let him similarly imagine the processions of foreign dignitaries and of Polish great lords as they entered into their voivodeships or town holdings, except that the royal entourage was not accompanied by the individual members of any lord's retinue. When some foreign dignitary was being escorted to a public audience, or a nobleman to his voivodeship or town holding, the line of carriages was followed by a cavalcade of riders collected from among the members of various noble estates. In Warsaw, by order

of the Great Crown Marshal,³⁶⁸ such a cavalcade would convene in front of the palace of the person initiating the procession. In other towns, at official processions, weddings, or funerals, friends would lend one another members from their own household retinue to assist at such functions.

The marshal's order was not so strict that it was impossible not to obey, and it was issued not in the form of an official proclamation, but rather by way of a request. However, any distinguished nobleman had a sufficient number of hangers-on in his retinue, especially young lords, for him to be eager to attend such a show, where he, his horse, and his fine saddlery would be on display before the eyes of the numerous public, especially the eyes of members of the fairer sex, before whom it was always pleasant to prance about on a fancy horse. Sometimes there were up to a hundred horses for them to feast their eyes on.

Lesser cavalcades were mostly composed of stablemasters and other members of noble households, led by a man allocated to it from the Great Crown Marshal's staff. Several paces behind would follow a train of courtiers, after which would follow the carriage bearing either the live person who was the initiator of the procession, or a funeral carriage bearing the deceased. In the instance of a live person, the cavalcade would accompany him both to his destination and back again to his residence. With a dead person, it would take him to the grave, after which people would disperse homeward, unless there was a wake to which people were invited.

Having described the cavalcades and parades preceding public gatherings under August III, we may now proceed to describe the various customs surrounding the gatherings themselves. However, before we enter into rooms and halls, let us pause in the courtyard, in order to mark the knavery of the rascals left outside, causing merriment and entertainment to some, while bringing embarrassment to others.

Since the Sejm conducted its deliberations during the day, and one never had any certainty as to how long a session would last, or whether it might not even be concluded on the same day on which it had begun, the gentlemen never assembled any earlier than around eleven o'clock in the morning. Having drawn up their carriages at the afore-mentioned hour,

³⁶⁸ The Great Crown Marshall was responsible for maintaining order within the city of Warsaw; see "The Marshal's Courts."

they would typically drag the session out into the night. For that reason, they did not send their carriages or saddle horses away. In any case, should anyone have wanted to send his conveyance back to his residence, it would have been no easy task, as one's carriage would be packed tight into a corner up against the other ones. And so, in addition to the reason just mentioned, it made sense to have one's carriage stand in place, wherever it could find a spot, and the same for saddle horses: it was simply too hard to extricate them from the crush.

The entire royal castle square and the nearby streets were packed so tightly with carriages stacked up right next to one another, and saddle horses the same, that only a tiny sliver of space was left open for foot traffic. The drivers, fore-riders, stable-masters, and other assistants, growing bored over the course of so many hours, made sport both of each other and of passers-by. First, they would vie among themselves for the places they had marked out for themselves with whips, flails, and lashes. Once they had settled that business and calmed down a bit, as soon as they spotted a passer-by dressed in a wolf-skin, sheepskin, or fox-fur coat, they did not fail to call out at the top of their lungs "Wolf! Wolf! Wolf!" or "Foxy! Foxy! Foxy!" To a sheepskin coat they would bleat "Baah! Baah! Baah!" for as long as that person was still in sight. Should some young woman walk or drive by, she would be assailed by the most vulgar language possible: "Hey, how's my little slut?!" "What do you mean, *your* little slut? She's mine!" "I hear she slept with the priest!" "No, with my master!" "No, with a Jew!" "I wager she'd sleep with anyone for a red złoty!"—in other words, whatever ugly thing that spittle might bring to the tongues of that unruly mob.

No one managed to avoid such a hearty welcome, no matter how well placed they might be. No one ever complained about it, though, and the higher authorities never took any interest. Whoever fell afoul of that mob covered their head, shielded their face, and high-tailed it out of the square, chased away as if a common criminal. They even bleated that way at Józef, the royal court jester, but not always, because he paid the bleating no heed, and if ever the shouters finally grew silent, he would start up on his own. Riding slowly past, he would sometimes be able to shut their mouths, grown weary from bleating. Being treated by him to snuff, some would start to sneeze, and others would laugh at the ones sneezing, while Józef would stick out his backside by way of parting and drive off.

As darkness fell, and the gentlemen still had not returned to their carriages, the drivers and stable hands, overcome with hunger, sleet, and the cold, would begin calling out to their masters in the dark: "Hey, hurry up, baldy!" "Hop in, four-eyes!" "Come on, hunchback!" "Let's go, you old sot!" "Time to fly, lover-boy!" "Get in, you old cripple," or whatever sobriquet, adapted to some characteristic feature or deformity of their masters, came to mind. As soon as the gentlemen began leaving once a session had ended, the noise rose to an uproar, as carriages and horses came to life, with each gentleman calling out to his driver or stableman: "Drive up here! This way!" "Bring my horse!" and the drivers calling back "Here I am!" "Over here!" or "No way, I can't!" Whoever had the better driver, or especially, the better fore-rider, got his carriage the quickest. A clever fore-rider, making his way along with the others to where the carriages were parked, would strike out this way and that with his whip, oblivious as to whether he hit man or beast, nobleman or commoner. One either got out of his way or stood up to him, thinking it better to put up an offense than to come across as timid or less skillful. Haiduks as well, along with lackeys, runners, and other members of the noble staff, according to the law of the club, and sometimes even of the saber, could be of much assistance in bringing forward the master's carriage. All of which tumult took place in the middle of the night, and in the course of the chaos many horses and people were injured. Some horses had to be put down, and many carriages were damaged beyond repair, not to mention lesser injuries and damage done to torn clothing, knocked-out eyes, and shredded lips.

Anyone who wanted to avoid the skirmish waited an hour or two for the crowd to thin out, after which he could calmly mount his carriage and drive away in one piece. However, for those who liked to fight over precedence, it often ended up that they found themselves sitting for several hours in a broken carriage, or crammed up so tightly, one against one another in a narrow passageway or exit gate, that neither one could budge, but had to wait until they could be rescued from the jam or until another carriage could be brought. In the meantime, those who had managed to avoid the obstruction would pass by on the other side, wishing those left stuck pleasant dreams out on the street. In order to forestall such misfortune, if a gentleman could safely walk to his carriage on foot, he did so, got in it and, not pressing ahead into the traffic, even if he

had to head in the opposite direction from the way he wanted, he would drive off unscathed.

It happened one time that prince Czartoryski, castellan of Wilno, who was a hunchback, decided to use this method. He left the Senate chamber by himself, unobserved by his livery. By chance spotting his carriage standing nearby, he walked over to it and got in just as his driver was loudly shouting "Hop on in, you old hunch-backed son-of-a-bitch!" The prince calmly answered back from the carriage, "I'm already in, thank you, my dear Matiasz!" To which the terrified driver answered back, "Oh, if your excellency is in, then I am out!" and off he ran. In vain the prince called after him to return, swearing on his honor that nothing would happen to him. But the driver, correctly calculating that he had earned for himself a good hundred lashes, was never seen again. The prince, left with no one other than his fore-rider, fearing lest some other amusing or untoward incident befall him, stayed put in his carriage until his servants, after searching for him high and low, finally located him and brought him back to his palace.

Great Crown Marshal Bieliński, as prone as he was in many ways to resort to the police, never lifted a finger in regard to the just-described racket and disorder among the drivers and stable hands. For him it was enough that he always have a place free for his own carriage and that no fore-rider, should it even be that of the hetman himself, ever dare to engage his own fore-rider in a contest of clubs.

What has been described here for the castle square took place everywhere, next to all noble palaces and public squares, wherever large numbers of carriages and horses congregated: smash, bang, and crash, along with the foulest possible language directed at the fairer sex. Since no one did anything to prevent it, it became increasingly deeply rooted in custom, and spread from the stable help and drivers to all of the liveried servants. It got to the point that when ladies invited to an evening ball dismounted in a throng of people, the palace help—lads, lackeys, Hungarian-style servants, and so on—whose task it was to relieve the guests of their fur coats and watch after them for the evening, would, while so doing, grab the ladies in the crotch, which a miscreant could easily accomplish without being noticed under the cover of the large shoulder-scarves the ladies wore. A lady so assaulted would whoop out in surprise at being thus grabbed

and leap out of the carriage like a shot. In the meantime another carriage would have driven up, the band would have reassembled, and the next lady would receive a similar send-off, and all was hidden under the cover of the throng and the darkness of night.

The great lords, having their own conscripted armies and court guards, sometimes tried to put an end to such licentiousness by catching some perpetrator in the act and giving him a tanning in the lock-up, but it was all in vain, for as soon as the soldiers came on guard, the servants standing next to them conducted themselves as innocently as could be, while those at a distance caused the greatest commotion and committed the most egregious improprieties. As soon as the soldiers charged to where the noise was, the ones they approached calmed down, while the ones they had just left took up again with their shouting and grabbing. And so the soldiers, running here and there and forcing their way through the crowd without success, returned empty-handed. Before long, however, the lords thought up an effective means for protecting the ladies from unwanted groping, by stationing two rows of guards stretching all the way from the carriage entrance to the first room, the entrance hall, and by not allowing any household servants into their midst, but shoving them back behind the soldiers. However, as for the tumult, it remained in fashion as if incurable, until finally it passed for routine entertainment.



VII.

ON PEASANT CUSTOMS



ON PEASANT CUSTOMS

This piece on peasant costume comprises both the final section of Kitowicz's Description and that section's only brief and incomplete chapter, covering only a few geographical regions. The author had intended to expand on this subject, but for unknown reasons—probably of health—his ambitions were cut short. Kitowicz's interest in Polish folkways anticipates by seventy-five years or so the voluminous multi-volume scholarly work on the subject by the encyclopedic ethnographer Oskar Kolberg (1814–1890).

Not that it particularly matters, but the contemporary interpretation of the Kraków regional male folk dress looks different from the way Kitowicz describes it, as the decorations the author ascribes here to the coat are more typical of the kaftan, a sleeveless garment often worn under the coat, or without a coat and over the shirt. Most notably, he does not mention peacock feathers as crowning the hat, familiar to contemporary audiences of the Mazowsze folk dance ensemble, consumers of the beer labeled Żywiec, and tourists purchasing Kraków dolls in Cepelia folk-art stores. The brass disks attached to the kaftan, rather than places on which to hang tools, are now designed to clank to the rhythm of the energetic krakowiak folk dance.

O.E.S.

As far as I can recall, the style of the peasant costume was the same as it is today. However, every province, and practically every voivodeship, had its own particular style. The Ruthenian peasant, as today, wore a żupan, in other words a coarse homespun coat of plain white wool, wide in the waist and sleeves, reaching to mid-calf. Beneath the coat, or żupan, was a coarse black shirt tucked into the trousers. For long journeys it was smeared with goat tallow for scaring off wild an-

imals. The trousers were of cloth and were often smeared with birch tar and grease dripping off the wagon. They were wide in the style of Turkish galligaskins, and hung down like bags between the legs. In wintertime they were of thick cloth of the same cut. On their feet they wore leather moccasins or bast³⁶⁹ clogs, tied with strings to the feet wrapped with footcloths. The legs would be wound around with the same kind of strips to mid-thigh. The belt on the coat or shirt was home-spun wool, most often red. On the head they wore a peaked cap with a narrow band of black sheepskin, the upper out of red French-cloth.³⁷⁰ Some were clean-shaven, while others, especially bee-keepers wore their beards long.

When they walked a long distance, they would take along with them several pairs of bast clogs, each person carrying his own over his shoulders. They did not take spare moccasins which, when they wore out, they would replace with bast clogs, but if ever a Ruthenian should come upon some carcass, he would easily be able to cut a piece of leather out of it and make moccasins without benefit of training as a cobbler. The same costume was worn for a journey or at home, the difference being that for the more important holidays he would be dressed in cleaner and better garb. In the summer he wore a straw hat, with a walking stick in place of a cane.

The Kraków peasant wore a gray wool coat decorated with yarn around the neck and sides, edged with multicolored tassels. The collar was large, hanging completely over the shoulders. The belt was leather decorated with yellow stud designs (the more rows of studs, the more expensive), buckled by a steel or brass clasp. Flat brass disks would be fastened to the right side of the belt—two, three, or more, up to five or six, for decoration, and also for practicality, for they would hang on some of the disks a knife, awl, whip-ends, or thin straps. A coarse shirt was for work, a thinner one for church, left hanging out above the knees over wool or linen trousers. The peaked cap was red, trimmed with narrow black sheepskin; in summer the hat would be of straw. The wooden cane would be set with flint. The flint was fixed under the bark of the trunk of a tree still standing, and only when the flint had grown well into the wood would they cut it and fash-

369 "Bast" is the fibrous part of various plants, woven into shoes throughout Eastern Europe into the twentieth century.

370 *plótno francuskie* (French cloth), likely denim or canvas.

ion the cane.³⁷¹ The more prosperous peasants would wear a coat of store-bought cloth of navy blue, piped with cording, with multi-colored tassels on the sides and around the neck, but this kind of coat did not hang over the shoulders (a fashion employed only for homespun coats), but had tin buttons running in a row from collar to belt.

The Mazovian peasant was dressed in either a gray or white homespun coat with red or green cuffs, sometimes with piping and sometimes without. The coarse shirt would hang out over the trousers for work, but would be tucked inside the trousers for church. Work trousers both winter and summer would be of homespun wool, while church trousers would be of navy blue wool cloth. The more prosperous would wear to church a żupan made of store-bought cloth, usually navy blue, rarely green, to which they would add black velvet lapels, open as with a *kontusz* with two large tin buttons on each. The belt is either red or yellow and red, made by braiding ribbons gathered together in bunches. Feet would be clad for church, but in summer they would go to work barefoot. A low cap in various colors, thickly spread with strands of oakum³⁷² serving as a topknot and protecting against blows from a stick, trimmed with a broad, usually black, sheepskin. In his hand he would carry a thick stick of oak or dogwood; and he wore a tangled head of hair. These tangles of hair can be found rather abundantly throughout Poland and Lithuania, but in comparison to other voivodeships, especially among the peasantry, one can state that this feature has taken root in the Mazovian area to such an extent that two out of three peasant heads become tangled in this way. Barely has a child grown any hair and it will wind itself into in a mass of tangles: thin, thick, some in the shape of a cap, separated into smooth strands or possibly knotted at the ends. Whether this happens by nature or from slovenliness, I will leave the matter for the doctors to decide.³⁷³

In the summer Mazurians wore simple wide-brimmed wool hats of white or gray, or straw hats...

[here the manuscript breaks off... —O.E.S.]

³⁷¹ The resulting product was a formidable cudgel, useful for defense.

³⁷² For oakum, see note 120. The perceived need of Mazovian peasants for a "hard hat" to protect them from head blows is noteworthy.

³⁷³ One guesses that this Mazovian "Polish plait," as it is known, comes about more from slovenliness than by nature or disease; see note 16 of the Preface.

READING KITOWICZ IN CONTEXT

Although Kitowicz's *Description* in many respects is *sui generis*, it may also be read in the context of Polish writing of his times, broadly speaking, although little is available in English. Here is a selective bibliography of works relating to Kitowicz's period and earlier, especially those referenced here in footnotes:

Kołątaj, Hugo. *Stan oświecenia w Polsce w ostatnich latach panowania Augusta III (1750–1764)* [The state of the Enlightenment in Poland in the last years of the reign of August III, 1775–1764]. Edited by J. Hulewicz. Biblioteka Narodowa. Series I, No. 144. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy imienia Ossolińskich, 1953.

For the reader knowing Polish, the writings of this major educational and political reformer are quite accessible. He is interesting to read in parallel with Kitowicz, as Kołątaj writes about many of the same issues and around the same time, in his case from the perspective of one of the leading intellectuals of the day.

Krasicki, Ignacy. *The Adventures of Nicholas Wisdom* (Mikołaja Doświadczyskiego przypadki). Translated and with notes by Thomas Hoisington. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1992.

Written by Poland's pre-eminent writer of the Enlightenment at about the same time as Kitowicz was writing his *Description*, this Voltairesque work follows the experiences of its young protagonist as he gains knowledge about how to live an honest life by coming into contact with various foreign cultures. Written from a more sophisticated perspective than Kitowicz's by far, it nevertheless is broadly corroborative of our author's critique of Polish eighteenth-century society, especially of the Sejm and the judiciary.

McKenna, Catherine. "The Curious of Evolution of *Liberum Veto*: Republican Theory and Practice in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1639–1703)." PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2012.

Concentrating on the last half of the seventeenth century (i.e., somewhat before Kitowicz's time), this is a readable and informative examination of the philosophical and division-of-power issues existing between the court, senate, wealthy magnates, and the Sejm that led to and maintained the principle of *liberum veto* in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, a subject to which Kitowicz devotes much attention in his chapter on the Sejm.

Mickiewicz, Adam. *Pan Tadeusz, or the Last Foray in Lithuania, A Story of Life among Polish Gentlefolk in the Years 1811 and 1812, in Twelve Books* (Pan Tadeusz, czyli ostatni zajazd na Litwie. Historia szlachecka z roku 1811 i 1812 we dwunastu księgach wierszem). 1834. An easily available dual-language edition, with translation by Kenneth R. MacKenzie may be found under *Pan Tadeusz* by Adam Mickiewicz. New York: Hippocrene Books, 2007.

Long touted as the Polish "national epic," this work of true genius can only be fully appreciated in its native language. Several English translations are available, both online and in print. The relevance of this work to Kitowicz is that it too concerns memorable characters, events, places, and things from the past whom the author remembers and wants to preserve in memory. With all his characters' foibles, Mickiewicz treats them nostalgically and sympathetically, while Kitowicz adopts a more biting and sarcastic tone. Despite the chasm of talent separating these two writers, they both share a cataloguing instinct and a desire to preserve the easily forgotten details of yesterday's everyday life and its artefacts, personalities, and customs. Professor Roman Pollak deems it likely that Mickiewicz had read Kitowicz at least fragmentarily.

Pasek, Jan. *Memoirs of the Polish Baroque, a Squire of the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania* (Pamiętniki). Translated and edited by Catherine Leach. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980.

These are the colorful, naively-written seventeenth-century memoirs of cavalryman Jan Pasek (1636–1701), who bravely and with much braggadocio fought under hetman Stefan Czarniecki in wars against Sweden, Muscovy, and the Turks. After his military career, Pasek settled down on his hereditary estate, took up farming, and became a bane to his country neighbors, bullying and pursuing lawsuits against them and becoming for all times the exemplar of the narrow-minded “Sarmatian” mentality of the provincial Polish nobility of his time. Pasek’s memoirs vividly fill out for Kitowicz’s reader what life in the Polish cavalry, to which Kitowicz devotes much space disparaging, was like in its heyday.

Rej, Mikołaj (1505–1569). A popular author in his time, largely self-educated, widely read, and quite prolific, Rej was the first major Polish author to write exclusively in his native tongue rather than in Latin. Rej’s overtly didactic works, especially *Żywot człowieka poczciwego* (A virtuous man’s life), contained in his *Zwierciadło* (The Mirror, 1568), can be viewed as a kind of precursor to Kitowicz’s chronicle of Polish customs, despite the difference in century and the authors’ motives for writing. In encyclopedic fashion, Rej gives common-sense instructions on how one should conduct oneself at various stages and stations of life, along the way providing much information about these stages and stations. In an earlier work, *Krótką rozprawą między trzema osobami, Panem, Wójtem a Plebanem* (A Short Debate between Three Persons: A Nobleman, A Village Head, and A Priest, 1543) Rej exposes in dialogic form the excesses, according to him, of the state, church, and society, with discussion of food, wine, hunting, clothes, the Sejm, and other subjects that later also fall prey to Kitowicz’s pen. Rej was a Calvinist, and a pet topic of his, not shared by Kitowicz, were excesses of the Roman Catholic Church. Throughout his works, Rej self-satisfiedly and at length extols the life of the well-married country gentleman on his estate as he hunts, farms, looks after his peasants and livestock, and enjoys the pleasures of living life to the full (while prescribing moderation for others in all things). Little of Rej has been translated into English. The *Żywot* and the *Rozprawa* can be found in Polish in the University of Gdańsk’s Virtual Library of Polish Literature.³⁷⁴

374 *Biblioteka literatury polskiej w internecie*, at literat.ug.edu.pl

Stanisławska, Anna. *Orphan Girl: A Transaction, or an Account of the Entire Life of an Orphan Girl by way of Plaintful Threnodies in the Year 1685* (Transakcja albo opisanie całego życia jednej sieroty przez żalosne treny od tejże samej pisane roku 1685). Translated and edited by Barry Keane. *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: The Toronto Series*, 45. Toronto, Ontario: Iter Academic Press, 2016.

An autobiography written, according to the taste of the times, in primitive rhymed verse by Poland's first known female writer, Anna Stanisławska (1651–1701), which epitomizes the era and style of the Sarmatian baroque, infused with mysticism, religiosity, and pathos (setting it off dramatically from Kitowicz). Additionally, in the Kitowiczian context, it may serve to fill out for the reader the female perspective, which in him is often lacking, as it deals with such themes as convent life, marriage, death, divorce, and lawsuits over property as seen from the female viewpoint.

APPENDIX: LIST OF TEXTS NOT INCLUDED

The translator has judged that not all of Kitowicz's texts would be of ready interest to the modern reader; this includes in particular Part III on religious orders. Other than this, the majority of texts from all remaining parts have been included. Part I has been divided in half—the first treating religious beliefs; the second, religious customs—so that the number of present parts matches the original seven. The original Part II, on early education, has become present Part III, with the other parts remaining as they were. To a limited extent, for better proportion, some shorter, thematically related chapters have been combined to make up a single longer one. In a few instances the position of a chapter was changed to create a better fit with the author's original thematic arrangement. The numbers below reference Kitowicz's original numeration of parts.

Part I: (This part is included in its entirety.)

Part II: Further Methods of School Instruction

On the Lwów Academy

Part III: (This part has been omitted.)

Part IV: Lower-Level Noble and City Courts

The Chancellor's Courts

The Referendary Courts

The Nunciature Courts

The Consistory Courts

Part V: Light Cavalry Divisions

The Crown Horse Guard

Janissaries and Hungarian Regiments

On Ordinate and Częstochowa Soldiers

The Knightly Circle

Part VI: On Wages and Services

Cards and Dice

Part VII: (The fragmentary chapter in this part is included.)

INDEX

- Alvarus, Emmanuel, 104
 Aristotle, 111
 August II of Saxony, 31n, 151n, 262, 297, 310, 330
 August III of Saxony, 5–6, 32n, 35n, 36, 56, 82, 85, 132, 133n, 156, 264–65, 284, 297
 Baudoin, Father Piotr Gabriel, 54–55
 Bieliński, Franciszek (Great Crown Marshal), 16, 123, 125–26, 149, 155–57, 381
 Boreyko, Piotr (Castellan of Zawichost), 358–60
 Branicki, Franciszek Ksawery, Great Crown Hetman, 244
 Branicki, Jan Klemens, Great Crown Hetman, 243–44, 206, 248
 Cartesius, Renatus (René Descartes), 112
 Catherine II of Russia, 4, 38n, 250–51
 Copernicus, Mikołaj, 112
 Czartoryski, Michał Fryderyk, Castellan of Wilno, 381
 Czartoryski, Adam Kazimierz, 154
 Czartoyski, August Aleksander, 206
 Czartoryski, Teodor, Bishop of Poznań, 68
 Czartoryski, the party of, 47, 132–36, 143, 169–70, 193, 249, 293n, 297
 Donatus, Aelius, 104
 Frank, Jakub, 29, 34–38
 Frederick II, King of Prussia, 91n, 136
 Krasicki, Ignacy, 11, 167, 389
 Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, 112
 Loupia, Józef Benedykt (mayor of Warsaw), 157
 Lubomirski, Aleksander Michał, Voivode of Kraków, 269
 Lubomirski, Antoni Benedykt, 135
 Lubomirski, family of, 193, 297
 Małachowski, Adam, Crown Carver and Marshal of the Crown Tribunal, 177, 358, 361, 363
 Małachowski, Jan, Great Crown Chancellor, 368
 Maria Josepha of Austria, wife of August III, 85n
 Mickiewicz, Adam, 11–12, 167, 181n, 269, 283, 390
 Mokronowski, Andrzej, freemason, 34
 Newton, Isaac, 112
 Pac, Antoni Michał, Great Lithuanian Scribe, 364–65
 Pasek, Jan, 10, 13, 167, 390–91
 Poniatowski, Stanisław, 134, 368
 Poniatowski, Stanisław August, Last King of Poland, 1, 4, 6, 10, 25, 38, 45n, 91, 114n, 134, 154, 243, 262, 265, 347
 Potocki, Franciszek Salezy, 310
 Potocki, Józef, Great Crown Hetman, 191, 206, 259, 264
 Potocki, the party of, 169–170, 193
 Raczyński, Edward, 1–2, 20
 Radziwiłł, Michał, Great Lithuanian Hetman, 229
 Radziwiłł, Karol Stanisław, Voivode of Wilno, 358, 363–65
 Rej, Mikołaj, 10, 391
 Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 40
 Rzewuski, Wacław Piotr, Voivode of Podolia, 134
 Rzewuski, family of, 193

- Sanguszko, Janusz, Court Marshal of
Lithuania, Ordinate of Ostróg, 190,
207–8, 248–49, 358
- Sapieha, Piotr, Voivode of Smoleńsk, 315
- Sołtyk, Kajetan, Bishop of Kraków, 376
- Spinoza, Baruch, 40
- Stanisławska, Anna, 167, 392
- Thomas Aquinas, Saint, 78n, 111
- Szembek, Krzysztof Antoni, Archbishop
of Gniezno, 31–32
- Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet), 40
- Brühl, Heinrich von, 6, 132, 133n, 169,
262, 264
- Zamoyski, family of, 59, 193



FIGURE 2.

Father Jędrzej Kitowicz, the “Warsaw” portrait, artist unknown.

Reproduced with the permission of the Muzeum Literatury imienia Adama Mickiewicza, Warsaw.



FIGURE 3.

Father Jędrzej Kitowicz, the “Kraków” portrait, artist unknown.

Reproduced with the permission of the Polska Akademia Umiejętności, Kraków.



FIGURE 4.

August III of Saxony, King of Poland, by Pietro A. Rotari (circa 1755–56).

Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden. Wikimedia Commons.



FIGURE 5.

Feast at the Radziwills by Aleksander Orłowski (1777–1832).
See Chapter 36 “Noble Tables and Banquets”

National Museum, Warsaw. Wikimedia Commons.



FIGURE 6.

Portrait of Karol Stanisław “Panie Kochanku” Radziwiłł (1734–90), artist unknown.
See Chapter 48 “On the More Famous Drunkards”

Wikipedia Commons.



FIGURE 7.

Stanisław Antoni Szczuka in Sarmatian attire, wearing a kontusz and karabela, artist unknown (circa 1735–40). See Chapter 40 “On Costume or Dress”

Palace museum in Wilanów. Wikipedia Commons.



FIGURE 8.

The Hussar, by Józef Brandt (1890).

Polish Museum, Rapperswil. Wikimedia Commons



FOR ANYONE INTERESTED IN THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT of Polish culture Kitowicz's work is a must-read. Writing in the late eighteenth century about gentry life during the reign of August III (1734–63), when French influences had not yet strongly affected the dress and customs of the land-owning class, Kitowicz provided a vivid portrayal of life under the last of the Saxon kings. Professor Swan's faithful and fluent translation, accompanied by copious explanatory footnotes, allows the reader to become a kind of participant-observer of the details of everyday life (religious practice, eating and drinking, child rearing, military service and much more).

ROBERT A. ROTHSTEIN

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ARMED WITH THE CURIOSITY AND METICULOUSNESS OF AN ETHNOLOGIST, Father Jędrzej Kitowicz observes the changing landscape of eighteenth-century Poland through the lens of objects, customs, habits, and regulations. Quintessentially Polish himself, Kitowicz represents major native vices and virtues: fear of foreign influences, short-sighted conservatism, at times even misogyny, but also curiosity, unique powers of perception, and a desire to order the chaotic world. Consequently, his ubiquitous, sometimes sardonic sense of humor is laced with underlying worry for the future of Poland, inscribing the publication into the long tradition of national melancholic narratives. *Customs and Culture in Poland under the Last Saxon King*, masterfully translated by Professor Oscar Swan of the University of Pittsburgh, is an inexhaustible source of information not only for historians, but also scholars who examine the difficult relations between east and west, religious studies, political sciences, and, above all, material culture enthusiasts.

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